Let's come together and unite

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Studies of the Changing Character of Voluntary Association Participation

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Proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit van Tilburg, op gezag van de rector magnificus, prof. dr. Ph. Eijlander, in het openbaar te verdedigen ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties aangewezen commissie in de aula van de Universiteit op woensdag 18 november 2009 om 16.15 uur door *Erik Jan van Ingen*, geboren op 1 maart 1978 te Nijmegen.

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Voorwoord (Preface in Dutch)

Wie op internet zoekt op de slogan “Let’s come together and unite” vindt allerhande verwijzingen, zoals “Let’s come together and unite against AIDS”, of “Let’s come together and unite [...] to build a sustainable economy and a green earth”, maar ook verwijzingen naar religieuze en politieke websites en verschillende verwijzingen naar een dance hit uit de jaren ’90. De moraal van dit verhaal is dat mensen zich om zeer diverse redenen verenigen, om vervolgens gezamenlijk iets te willen bereiken, wat kan uiteenlopen van het verbeteren van de wereld tot het samen afgaan van houseparty’s.

Sociologen en politicologen bestuderen dit soort verbanden en dan voornamelijk de meer geformaliseerde voorbeelden, zoals voetbalverenigingen of maatschappelijke organisaties. In navolging van mijn promotor – en misschien met een anglicisme – duid ik die het liefst aan met de term “vrijwillige associaties”. In de wetenschappelijke literatuur worden allerlei verwachtingen uitgesproken over de functies die vrijwillige associaties hebben voor de individuele deelnemer en de samenleving als geheel en bovendien over mogelijke veranderingen die in dit domein plaatsvinden.

Een aantal van die verwachtingen heb ik getoetst en de uitkomsten daarvan zijn in dit proefschrift te lezen; de grote lijnen in het concluderende hoofdstuk en de details in de afzonderlijke hoofdstukken. Dit is echter niet de plek om over onderzoek te praten, maar om mensen te bedanken. En dat zijn er nogal wat. Helaas blijft in het gebruikelijke persoonlijke en werkmatige contact het uitspreken van die dank nogal eens uit en daarom is het voorwoord van een proefschrift een prachtige plaats om dat te doen.

Paul, in de eerste plaats gaat mijn dank uit naar jou. Vanwege het vertrouwen dat je in mij had na het min of meer toevallige kruisen van onze paden en vanwege de vrijheid die je me altijd hebt gegeven om mezelf te ontwikkelen. Van dat vallen en opstaan begin ik in toenemende mate de vruchten te plukken. Wat mij betreft werken we in de toekomst nog vaak samen, zodat ik nog vaak kan lachen om je onnavolgbare humor met serieuze ondertoon. Dit onderzoeksproject was overigens waarschijnlijk niet tot stand gekomen zonder de stichting Synthesis, die het onderzoeksprogramma *Civil society en nieuwe maatschappelijke tegenstellingen* financiert, waarbij de Universiteit van Tilburg als tegenprestatie mijn aanstelling bekostigde. Ik dank het bestuur van de stichting voor de belangstelling in mijn onderzoek.

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Tilburg werkt, maar ik troost me met de gedachte dat we elkaar altijd nog tegen het lijf kunnen lopen in een winkelcentrum in Tilburg West! Matthijs, bedankt in de tweede helft van het traject voor de heldere inzichten en onophoudelijke stroom van goede ideeën. Ik kijk uit naar onze verdere samenwerking. Uiteraard gaat mijn dank ook uit naar de commissieleden die tijd hebben vrijgemaakt om mijn proefschrift te beoordelen: Filip Wijkström, Marc Hooghe, Beate Völker en Gabriël van den Brink.

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De afgelopen jaren waren niet zonder omzwervingen. Van de tijd bij het departement vrijetijdwetenschappen zal vooral de sprong-in-het-diepe onderwijservaring me nog lang bijblijven en hierbij wil ik graag Bertine, Anneke, Antonis en Hugo bedanken voor de prettige samenwerking. Ook aan het jaar part-time werken bij het SCP heb ik zeer goede herinneringen, wat vooral te danken is aan de mensen met wie ik het meest intensief heb samengewerkt. Koen, Jos en Ineke: het was me een waar genoegen. Andries: lang leve de liefde voor muziek; ik moet zeker nog een keer komen kijken!

Wat zou het leven zijn zonder vrienden? Ik geloof niet dat ik – na afronding van dit proefschrift – nog in deze relatief goede mentale gezondheid zou verkeren zonder regelmatig op vrienden te kunnen rekenen om alles wat met werk te maken heeft te doen vergeten. Sjoerd: we zijn niet bepaald meer de "children of the night", maar laten we de "Berlijnse jaren" koesteren en nog lang een hoop lol maken. Daar gaan verschillende woonplaatsen en levensfasen niets aan veranderen! Arnold: de harde kern staat! Vossen verliezen hun haar, niet hun streken en snappen nog steeds weinig van de andere sekse. Dank ook aan andere oude en nieuwe vrienden, zoals

Wouter, Martijn, Vincent, Kristel, Rachel, Steef, Guido, Pauline, Bartelijn en Sander; we moeten vaker afspreken. Hans: we gaan nog een keer terug naar Mexico, of ergens anders naartoe, maar dit keer zonder voedselvergiftiging!

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Erik van Ingen,
September 2009.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Debate about Voluntary Associations

When the first volume of the *American Journal of Sociology* appeared in 1895, it contained an article on "The Place and Function of Voluntary Associations" (Henderson, 1895), in which the author concluded that:

> It is bewildering to contemplate the clubs, societies, guilds, associations, unions, companies, congresses, fraternities, sodalities and lodges which figure in city directories and in the society columns of newspapers. In order to understand them we must seek some rational principles of classification and of judgment (p. 329).

The subject would regain much scientific interest exactly a century later, following two publications by Putnam (1995a, 1995b). The ongoing process of classifying and evaluating various kinds of voluntary associations has continued into the present day. Furthermore, there is a persistent concern about the state of voluntary association participation: people are apparently becoming less inclined to become and remain affiliated with voluntary associations, and they are less inclined to volunteer. If they are true, these trends might endanger the functions of voluntary associations, which range from providing nonprofit services or facilitating collective action (external effects) to offering members the opportunity to meet others they would not meet otherwise or enhance their civic and social skills (internal effects; see below).

The concern about declining participation in voluntary associations is not new; the histories of sociology and political science contain several references to this issue, including Putnam's *Bowling Alone* hypothesis (1995a, 1995b, 2000, 2002), which is the most recent example. The current debate is marked by considerable dispute concerning whether voluntary association participation is indeed declining (e.g., Fischer, 2005; Paxton, 1999). As I argue elsewhere in this dissertation, however, this issue is among the least interesting questions to be addressed in voluntary association research. It is more important to assess the outcomes that are produced by various kinds of voluntary associations (in order to know what is gained or lost when participation increases or decreases), who benefits from this participation, and whether alternatives exist that could produce these outcomes. Furthermore, some evidence suggests that the nature of voluntary association participation is changing in ways that are hardly visible when looking at aggregate numbers.

A shift towards more passive types of participation is one trend that may have far-reaching consequences for the internal effects produced by voluntary associations (Halpern, 2005; Putnam, 2000). As I explain in Chapter 2, many of

these effects (e.g., generation of trust, skills, and democratic values) presume face-to-face contact with fellow members and active involvement in associational activities. Another shift is a change in the profiles of participants and volunteers. According to Knulst and van Eijck (2006), younger cohorts are considerably less involved in volunteering in the Netherlands than are older cohorts. More generally, changes in the sociodemographic profiles of participants and volunteers do not necessarily produce changes in aggregate participation figures, although they may alter the distribution of "profits" from associational participation, and they may have implications for the future of the voluntary sector.

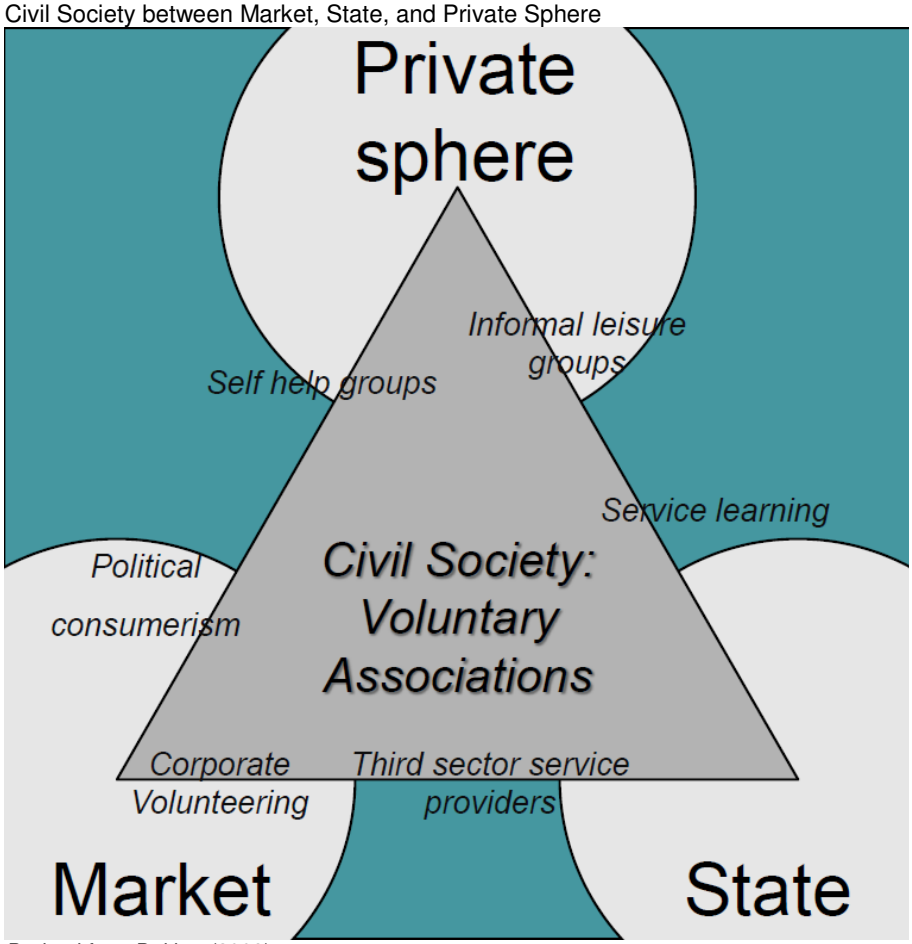
Other authors have suggested that the boundaries of voluntary association are becoming increasingly blurred (Dekker, 2002, 2004). In other words, the principles of voluntary association (see Section 2.1) also seem to emerge in other domains, including work (Estlund, 2000, 2003). Cross-over types of organizations and initiatives also appear to be emerging at the borders of civil society and other domains. Figure 1.1 shows these domains and several practices that combine elements from both domains (e.g., self-help groups, corporate volunteering, and service learning). In addition to voluntary associations as such, this dissertation focuses on the connection between civil society and the private sphere by examining coinciding trends and mutual influences (Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 9). For example, Halpern (2005) has suggested a shift from associational involvement to informal sociability in which people no longer need the fixed settings of associations to take care of their social lives, choosing instead to "[...] pick up the telephone and see their friends for dinner" (p. 205).

From a social-scientific perspective, the internal effects of voluntary associations can be quite valuable, as they may help to solve issues of cohesion, integration, and inequality. The outcomes or benefits of voluntary association participation can be grouped into three types. First, such participation serves purposes in people's everyday lives. Voluntary associations offer their members the opportunity to play a weekly game of soccer, to stay in touch with the latest business developments, to become acquainted with others in a friendly atmosphere, or to receive discounts and information on new products. Second, participation in voluntary associations may have *external* effects.[1] These effects refer to the potential of the combined efforts of members to exert influence on policy making, decision processes, and public opinion. The voice of associations – particularly those with a large membership base – can be powerful enough to influence the formulation of collective agreements, raise awareness about environmental problems, or contribute to the improvement of human rights. Third, and most appealing to sociologists, voluntary associations may have *internal* effects, which arise as side-effects of participation. They include the enhancement of civic skills, the encouragement of

[1] Fung (2003) provides a helpful overview of these types of functions.

generalized trust, the enlargement of social resources, and the stimulation of political interest and activity.

Figure 1.1
Civil Society between Market, State, and Private Sphere



Derived from Dekker (2008)

These internal effects pose a considerable challenge to researchers, as several theoretical and empirical difficulties exist.[2] It is often unclear how effects are produced and which mechanisms are responsible for their production. Moreover, improving our knowledge in this area requires us to solve issues of causality and generalizability with regard to the findings of current research (see Section 2.5).

[2] These issues are discussed in depth in chapter 2.

In summary, the social-scientific research of the field of voluntary associations examines the extent to which voluntary association participation is changing, how these changes can be explained, and what stands to be gained or lost as a result of these changes. This dissertation will contribute to that literature by answering three research questions (which correspond to the three parts of this book, as described below). It is organized in a modular fashion; the empirical chapters can be read independently and are written in the form of journal-style articles.[3] Chapters 1, 2, and 10 discuss their common ground.

1.2 Shifts in Participation, Determinants, and Effects

This dissertation is divided into three parts, each of which is discussed below. The distinction is not always strict; several chapters combine elements of more than one part. Preceding the empirical chapters, Chapter 2 discusses theory and the outcomes of previous studies, as well as several shortcomings of that research.

Shifts in Voluntary Association Involvement

As indicated in the previous section, issues of declining membership rates figure prominently in the discussion about voluntary association participation. This part of the dissertation analyzes those trends, as well as the way they are linked to trends in related contexts. The research question for this part of the study is as follows:
How has voluntary association participation developed since 1975, and how are these developments associated with trends in related social contexts?

In *Chapter 3*, I begin to answer this question by analyzing trends in volunteering and other types of social participation, in order to determine whether substitutions between these types of social participation have taken place at the aggregate level. The other types of social participation include informal sociability indoors (paying visits and receiving visitors), informal sociability outdoors (in bars, restaurants, at receptions and parties, among others), and maintaining social contacts at a distance (by telephone calls and letters). The trends are examined according to an age-period-cohort framework, using data from the Dutch Time Use Survey (DTUS) between 1975 and 2000.[4] The examination of cohort differences may provide an indication of

[3] Except for Chapter 3, these articles were written together with co-authors. When referring to these chapters in first person, I will therefore use "we". When referring to the other chapters I will use "I".

[4] For information about the DTUS in English, see Ingen, Stoop & Breedveld (2009). For in-depth information in Dutch, see http://www.tijdbesteding.nl. At the time Chapter 3 was written, data from the DTUS 2005 were not yet available. These data were available by the time the conclusions of this dissertation were written (see Chapter 10). A brief overview of developments occurring between 2000 and 2005 is provided in the Appendix.

future developments and the way in which various types of social participation are combined (at the cohort level).

This chapter analyzes a number of the driving forces behind participation trends (see Section 2.3), most of which are addressed in several chapters. The analysis includes changes in religiosity, education, working hours, television viewing, and mobility. In principle, all determinants of participation that have changed in the population may affect the trends, although increases in educational attainment and decreases in religiosity have been topics of particular interest in previous research.

Through education, people acquire social and civic skills, which make their contributions to voluntary associations more valuable and increase their inclination to become involved. Nonetheless, it is not fully clear whether increases in average education level stimulate associational growth. Counterarguments assert that increases in average educational attainment may diminish the necessity of voluntary associations, as highly educated people may desire more flexible and informal kinds of social participation instead. The role of education is examined in several chapters of this dissertation.

Religious involvement has always been a strong predictor of voluntary association participation (e.g., Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006), as churchgoers supposedly have stronger altruistic values and are better integrated into recruitment networks (see Chapters 2 and 6). Because the average level of conventional religiosity has decreased considerably in the Netherlands and other Western European countries since World War II, an accompanying decline of associational participation should be expected. Available empirical evidence, however, does not seem to correspond to this expectation (Bekkers, 2004). One of the aims of this chapter is therefore to shed light on the role of religiosity as a driving force behind associational changes in the Netherlands in recent decades.

Chapter 4 examines the individualization and informalization hypotheses, or the notion that people are increasingly choosing to perform their activities in individual and informal group contexts instead of in the context of voluntary associations. Part of this trend can be explained by increases in resources and options: people may no longer need the structure and organization of voluntary associations, as they are well capable of arranging their own company and facilities. Another part of the explanation could have to do with structural restrictions, e.g., time pressure and fragmentation caused by the combination of work and household tasks. As a result, voluntary association activities may be increasingly replaced by such informal group activities as those within support groups (Wuthnow, 1994), informal local political groups (Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti, 2005), and leisure groups in which people "[...] come together on a casual basis and at irregular times to play darts, talk about football, discuss a novel, raise consciousness, offer mutual support, or play a scratch game of football in the park" (Newton, 1999, p. 11).

We test the individualization and informalization hypotheses by investigating the social context of leisure activities in the Netherlands between 1975 and 2005. We subsequently re-examine the driving forces behind these trends by considering the factors addressed in Chapter 3, along with the role of time problems and self-development values.

In *Chapter 5*, we examine a connection between the private sphere and volunteering (see Figure 1.1) focusing on leisure activities and the ways in which they can enhance volunteering and voluntary association participation. We hypothesize that situations in which people spend considerable time with others outside the household and in productive activities (in which people are active, creating or doing things, and working towards common goals; see Chapter 5 for a discussion) tend to stimulate volunteering. We know little about these connections. Although we refrain from drawing conclusions about causal order in this chapter, the theoretical arguments for seeing leisure activities as antecedent and volunteering as consequence are most plausible. In other words, productive leisure activities (or serious leisure) in broader social circles are expected to stimulate the generation of skills and growth of social networks, which should subsequently increase the likelihood of volunteering.

The Determinants of Voluntary Association Participation in Perspective

Although a number of the determinants of voluntary association participation (e.g., gender, education, and income, as discussed in Chapter 6) have been known for decades, there is much that we still do not know. For example, we know little about changes in these determinants over time. We also know little about the variation of these individual-level determinants across countries (and therefore about the generalizability of these relationships) and their interrelationships with institutional or macro-level factors. By shedding light on these issues, the second part of this dissertation aims to contribute to the body of knowledge about determinants of voluntary association participation. The research question for this part of the study is as follows:

To what extent do the determinants of voluntary association participation vary over time and across countries, and how is the welfare state related to the latter?

Chapter 6 examines the determinants of volunteering and the extent to which they have changed in the Netherlands over the past decades. Knowledge about changes in the explanatory power of "well-known" determinants of volunteering is useful, and it can place presumed shifts in voluntary association participation in perspective. For example, volunteering may increase as a result of a rise in the average educational level, although such an increase could be very modest if the effect of education were to decrease simultaneously. In addition to education, we will consider religiosity, life-cycle differences, and employment status to see whether their effects on

volunteering have changed over time. Previous research has suggested that volunteer work has increasingly become the domain of older and retired persons.

In this chapter, we distinguish between selection into volunteering (participation) and the duration of such volunteering (time investment). The total production of volunteering equals the number of volunteers multiplied by the number of hours they work. From the perspective of a voluntary organization, it can be important to have a broad base of volunteers, as well as volunteers who are willing to spend a considerable number of hours on time-consuming tasks. We examine possible differences in the considerations underlying these two choices (participation and time investment), hypothesizing that determinants regarding people's networks and motivation are the most important for selection into volunteering, while structural restrictions connected to work and the household are the most important determinants of time investment in volunteering.

In *Chapter 7*, we examine three determinants of voluntary association participation (gender, education, and income) from a cross-national perspective. Whereas Chapter 6 compares determinants over time, this chapter compares determinants across countries. The influence of these determinants is phrased in terms of inequality: gender, education, and income are all associated with unequal chances of becoming involved. We also examine macro-level determinants, especially the role of the welfare state. We hypothesize that more elaborate welfare state arrangements reduce the differences caused by gender, education, and income, thereby leveling the inequalities in associational involvement. In this way we contribute to the knowledge about how micro and macro factors (and their interrelations) influence voluntary association participation.

Effects of Voluntary Association Participation

The third part of this dissertation focuses on the effects of participation. As discussed at the start of this chapter, voluntary associations are considered to have internal effects on their members, which is one of the reasons why Putnam (2000) shows that social capital is declining while arguing that this decline should be seen as an alarming trend. If it is true that associational participation provides people with generalized trust and norms of reciprocity, we would not like to see it disappear. This part of the dissertation is thus related to the part about shifts in associational involvement: we would like to know what society gains or loses when participation increases or decreases. The focus of the chapter is on two topics: political activity and social resources. These topics represent a broad range of presumed effects of associational involvement. Enhanced participation (including political participation) should be beneficial to the common good (the functioning of democracy), and it is an important topic in political science. Enhanced social resources are beneficial for individual members, and it is an important topic in sociology. The research question for this part of the study is as follows:

To what extent are participants' social resources and political activity enhanced as a result of their associational participation?

The literature about voluntary associations suggests a large number of effects of participation, although few have been analyzed thoroughly. Issues of causality are especially urgent; it is often questionable whether the relationship between associational involvement and a connected topic results from a participation effect (or a growth effect, as a result from experiences and interactions within associations) or a selection effect. For most topics, participation and selection effects are theoretically plausible and often in the same direction. The following two chapters attempt to contribute to our knowledge about the causal effects of participation.

Chapter 8 addresses the *schools-of-democracy* hypothesis or the idea that involvement in voluntary associations and organizations enhances political interest and efficacy, democratic values, and civic skills, thereby stimulating political action. Although this argument is well-known in political science – it can found in the classical works by Tocqueville (2000 [1835]) and Almond & Verba (1965) – issues of both causality and generalizability have been researched insufficiently. In this chapter, we discuss the current literature and try to deduce hypotheses that can be tested with cross-sectional data. We analyze whether the claims that are postulated in this "neo-Tocquevillian paradigm" (Warren, 2001) are valid in the seventeen Western and Central European countries included in the European Social Survey (2001/ 2002).

Chapter 9 investigates another possible internal effect of associational participation, in this case from a perspective more related to everyday life. Voluntary associational participation can arguably stimulate growth in social resources, roughly defined as the nearby social networks that connect people with others on which they can rely and who provide them with support. By becoming involved in voluntary associations, people meet others they did not know before, and they can build relationships through the interactions and cooperation that are required in the activities of their associations. This may result in enhanced social resources. We examine this hypothesis by considering the effects of becoming a member of an association and starting voluntary work by applying models that distinguish participation from selection effects, using the two-wave panel data from the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS). We also consider participation effects among particular groups that have fewer opportunities to acquire social resources in other domains.

1.3 Notes on Concepts and Context

Concepts

"A key problem in the study of voluntary action (voluntary participation, citizen participation, discretionary participation, social participation, common interest activity, citizen involvement – all approximate synonyms as used here) is definition" (Smith, 1975, p. 247). The definition of voluntary association is discussed in depth in Chapter 2. In short, it concerns a group of people who share a common goal, which can be achieved through cooperation in repeated activities, and who are guided by established rules of membership. Different terms can be used to indicate the ways in which people relate to voluntary associations, however, and many of them overlap to a certain degree. A brief overview of the meaning of these terms may help to avoid confusion.

Participation is the term most used in this dissertation. It is meant to indicate all possible ways in which individuals can relate to voluntary associations, ranging from passive (e.g., simply donating money to the association) to active modes (e.g., volunteering). A term that is synonymous (and used interchangeably) with participation is *involvement*. With the exception of Chapter 2, in which the usage of terms is strict, the term voluntary association (and its derivatives) is also abbreviated to association. As a consequence, the following concepts have similar meaning: voluntary association participation, associational participation, voluntary association involvement, and associational involvement.

To indicate the degree of involvement, different terms are used that can be ordered along a continuum from passive to active: *passive membership/donating money*, *active membership* (also referred to as ordinary membership), and *volunteering*. The essential difference between passive and active membership involves the presence of interaction with other members. The difference between membership and volunteering ultimately involves the contrast between the consumption and the production of collective goods within the association (Wilson, 2000). In practice, the distinction between membership and volunteering is gradual; volunteers often also consume some of the associations' collective goods, while active members often contribute somewhat to the common good.

It is also important to note that volunteering does not necessarily take place in an organizational context. For example, informal help is also sometimes considered to be part of volunteering, and volunteer work can be done for professional organizations. Voluntary association participation and volunteering are thus distinct concepts in theory. There is considerable overlap between the two terms, however, and sociologists often regard volunteering as part of voluntary association participation. With regard to measurement, volunteering is often part of associational participation, as both are combined into a single question (e.g., "Do you belong to organization X?", and subsequently "Have you done volunteer work for that organization?").

The concept of *social participation* is used to indicate sociability in a very broad sense; it contains virtually all social interactions outside the domains of work, school, and family. Examples include voluntary association participation, informal gatherings in public places, visiting friends, and instant messaging. In other words, it refers to social interactions in the domains of both civil society and the private sphere (Figure 1.1).

The term *civic engagement* (or participation, or activity) is used to indicate the kind of voluntary association participation that serves the common good, or a purpose beyond the individual. In other words, being a member of a soccer club is not considered civic engagement, but volunteering for Amnesty International is.

In the empirical chapters of this book, voluntary association participation does not always have the same operationalization, due to the use of different datasets (with different ways of asking about associational participation). In some cases, it is necessary to use aggregated indicators (usually different types of associations) to preserve statistical power in the analyses. Furthermore, associational involvement is used as both a dependent variable (Chapters 3 to 7) and an independent variable (Chapters 8 and 9). The Appendix (Table A1.1) includes an overview of the operationalizations used in the different chapters.

Context

This dissertation focuses on voluntary association participation in comparative perspectives in terms of time and space (countries). Ideally, the two perspectives should be combined in order to examine multiple countries over time. In practice, however, it is difficult enough to find single-country data that cover a considerable time span and include an elaborate set of harmonized participation indicators. The chapters of this dissertation therefore focus on either comparison through time in the Netherlands or comparison across countries in Europe. One exception is that Chapter 5 draws upon data from the British Time Use Survey, as similar data[5] in the Netherlands were unavailable at the time of writing. The period under study is 1975 to 2005; data from before 1975 are scarce, and the data that are available are largely incomparable with data from more recent years. The empirical chapters contain a more elaborate description of the datasets that are used.

The Netherlands is an interesting country within which to study voluntary associations. Participation levels in the Netherlands are among the highest in the world, in terms of both involvement in voluntary associations (Curtis, Baer, & Grabb, 2001) and involvement in informal networks (Pichler & Wallace, 2007). Another factor that makes the Netherlands an interesting case is the fact that it is "close to the cutting edge of cultural change" (Inglehart & Baker, 2000, p. 31), or in late stages of (post-)modernization processes. Secularization has taken a strong hold

[5] The respondents of TUS in the UK (2000) were asked to record the social context and location of the activities they performed in their diaries.

in the Netherlands (De Hart, 2001), and the decline in religious participation is one of the most important aspects in a process of de-traditionalization (De Beer, 2007). As a result of these changes, shifts in associational preferences are likely to manifest themselves relatively clearly in the Netherlands.

The available data on trends in voluntary association participation show mixed evidence regarding a decline of participation. Data from 1995 or before indicate stable or increasing levels of voluntary association activity (Andersen, Curtis, & Grabb, 2006; De Hart & Dekker, 1999). The inclusion of data from the decade thereafter reveals a slight decrease (De Hart, 2005; Dekker, De Hart, & Faulk, 2007). In other words, the modest decline since 1990 is best observable using data from a period up to at least 2005. Disproportionately strong decreases are shown for churches, women's organizations, and political parties (De Hart, 2005; Halpern, 2005). Chapter 2 provides a more elaborate overview of previous research on social capital trends and discusses ways of evaluating the different findings.

In terms of associational participation, the Netherlands is situated together with the Nordic countries in a high-involvement cluster. In contrast to this cluster, countries in Eastern and Southern Europe have low average levels of involvement. An intermediate position is occupied by countries in Central Europe and the UK (Pichler & Wallace, 2007).

Before examining what is happening to voluntary association participation in these contexts in the empirical analyses of this dissertation, I discuss the theoretical ideas that have been advanced in the debate about voluntary associations, along with the outcomes of previous research in the next chapter.

2. Previous Research and Theory

The aim of this chapter is twofold: to discuss previous research and to create a theoretical framework that connects the separate chapters. Partly, the information provided will overlap with the empirical chapters, which are more focused on deducing hypotheses and the most recent outcomes of empirical research. However, the theoretical ideas and mechanisms will be discussed more in-depth in this chapter.

2.1 The Concept of Voluntary Association

This section elaborates on the theoretical ideas behind the concept of voluntary association, and discusses the works of several scholars, some of whom mainly deal with the *association* part, some with the *voluntary* part, and others with both.

In the language of everyday life, the notion of voluntary association is unproblematic. People use the term in their communication with others without confusion or misunderstanding. "We ordinarily mean those kinds of attachments we choose for specific purposes – to further a cause, [...] play a sport, work through a problem of identity or meaning, get ahead in a career, or resolve a neighborhood problem" (Warren, 2001, p. 39). In this sense, there are numerous examples of organizations we usually refer to as voluntary associations: soccer clubs, chess clubs, fraternities, women's groups, activists' organizations, consumer organizations, drama clubs, political parties, Parent Teacher Associations, neighborhood associations, trade unions, and religious organizations, among others. However, when sociologists or political scientists refer to the theoretical concept of voluntary association they usually have something different (although related) in mind. Voluntary association in this sense is an ideal type of social organization, with characteristics (which will be discussed below) that distinguish voluntary association from other types of social relations. However, the everyday examples usually only show some of the characteristics, and as a result, there is often room for discussion about whether phenomenon X is a voluntary association yes or no. Therefore, some authors suggest making a literal distinction between the specific, everyday examples of voluntary associations and the ideal type or theoretical notion of voluntary association. Parsons (1971) uses "associations" versus "the associational principle", for instance, and Warren (2001) uses the terms "associations" versus "associational relations". This also means that voluntary association as a principle way of social organization does not have to be restricted to voluntary associations, but can also occur in other social contexts (Dekker, 2002).

Cole (1920) was one of the first authors who tried to distinguish between various kinds of associations analytically. His arguments are still echoed in the

current academic ideas about voluntary association, therefore his work is a good starting point of the discussion.[1] The definition of association given by Cole is the following:

> [...] I mean any group of persons pursuing a common purpose or system or aggregation of purposes by a course of co-operative action extending beyond a single act, and, for this purpose, agreeing together upon certain methods or procedures, and laying down, in however rudimentary a form, rules for common action. (Cole, 1920, p. 37)

In the remainder of this section, I will look at the constituting parts of this definition in more detail and subsequently discuss the meaning of the concept of voluntariness.

Group of Persons and Cooperative Action beyond a Single Act

The concept of association refers to a group of people, a collaboration, or cooperation. It is a "type of operative organization" (Parsons, 1971), a way in which people come together and interact, to achieve a common goal. According to de Tocqueville (2000 [1835]), the vividness of associational life in the United States was the result of a "doctrine of self-interest well understood" (p. 500). It is in people's self-interest to associate (cf. Jordan & Maloney, 2007); by "sacrificing" one's time and efforts in helping out others, better results will be achieved. Subsequently, these others can help you to come to better results. In this sense, reciprocal behavior is rational behavior (Coleman, 1990). According to Weber (1968), these rational considerations distinguish associations from communities; "a subjective feeling of the parties, whether affectual or traditional, that they belong together" (p. 40) is what makes communities. On the other hand, "A social relationship will be called 'associative' […] if and insofar as the orientation of social action within it rests on a rationally motivated adjustment of interests or a similarly motivated agreement" (Weber, 1968: 41). This distinction is useful, although in practice it will not be strict; associations are more likely to result from rational considerations than communities on average, but affective motivations may be among the reasons for joining or continuing membership as well.

Voluntary association involves social relations with ties of intermediate distance (Warren, 2001; see Table 2.1). Scholars sometimes refer to voluntary associations by the terms secondary and tertiary associations (e.g. Gutmann, 1998). Secondary associations are distinguished from primary associations, which consist of the social circles of closest friends and family members. Tertiary associations are mostly based on passive membership, in which members are primarily connected to the organization instead of each other (although more active kinds of involvement are also possible). Primary associations consist of ties of the shortest distance (most

[1] Although less convenient as point of departure, earlier works exist that deal with voluntary association. Apart from de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, which will also be discussed in this chapter, thoughts about types of association can be traced back to the works of Hobbes and Locke (see Warren, 2001).

intimate), secondary associations of ties of intermediate distance, and tertiary associations of ties of the largest distances (or no ties at all). As a consequence, the ties in secondary associations (and in tertiary associations, as far as they exist) are more diverse than the ones in primary associations, and the chance of meeting others with a different education, race, or with contrasting opinions are greater. This is important for some of the effects of associational participation, such as political socialization (see 2.4).

Common purpose

The common goals of voluntary association – which are a crucial part of Cole's definition – can be extremely diverse. They can be as small-scale as maintenance of facilities that are shared by the inhabitants of one flat, or as large-scale as reduction of global warming. However, a crucial feature is that they do not involve the distribution of financial profits among members: "A minimal definition of an association is a formally organized named group, most of whose members – whether persons or organizations – are not financially recompensated for their participation" (Knoke, 1986, p. 2). In the Netherlands, this is the most important characteristic of the voluntary association in a legal sense. The law states that a voluntary association is not allowed to distribute profit among its members and that it should have an internal democratic structure (Kollen, 1995). These restrictions are important when distinguishing voluntary association from business or market types of social relations.

Apart from a common purpose, Cole also mentions a "system or aggregation of purposes". Some voluntary associations serve multiple purposes under the umbrella of a common goal. A neighborhood organization's mission may be to facilitate contact between people living in a certain area, which involves the organization of computer courses for some, and weekly games of bridge for others.

Methods, Procedures, and Rules for Common Action

The third element in Cole's definition is "agreeing together upon certain methods or procedures" and establishing "rules for common action", which is related to Warren's (2001) distinction in "constitutive media of association" (p. 109). These methods are characterized by collective decisions and actions, which are not organized through money or price incentives (and not through legal coercion), but through communication, norms and customs. Similarly, Parsons (1971) notes that associational organization is characterized by "a certain egalitarianism" and the "importance of procedural institutions" (p. 24). When coming to decisions, it is important to reach consensus or at least approval of the majority of the members. This needs to be facilitated through discussion, which serves multiple purposes:

Discussion within associations is a primary sphere of the operation of influence as a medium for facilitating social process. From the viewpoint of an interested party, discussion serves to improve the chances of having his view

prevail; from the viewpoint of the collectivity, it facilitates an approach to consensus (p. 25).

The idea of internal democracy – or horizontally structured social interactions – is important for the generation of the political effects of associational participation, such as political interest and efficacy.

Table 2.1
Social Relations according to Closeness and Coordination

	Means of Social Coordination				
Closeness of Social Relations	*Legal Coercion*		*Social (norms & communication)*		*Money*
Distant	States	Mediating associations: "political society"	Mediating spaces: Publics	Mediating associations: "economic society"	Markets
Intermediate			Civil Society Pure associative relations		
Intimate			Families, friendships		

Source: Warren (2001)

Table 2.1 gives a summary of Warren's distinctions in social relations according to their means of social coordination and intimacy. In the sector of the *civil society*, "[…] voluntary associative relations are dominant" (Warren, 2001, p. 57), and social relations are of intermediate strength and facilitated through norms and communication. Alternatively, the relations with family and friends are of a more intimate character, whereas political or economic relations are of a more distant character. The latter two are (predominantly) characterized by legal coercion and money as means of social coordination.

Voluntariness

Cole's definition concerns the concept of *association*. Additionally, the use of the term *voluntary*, which has several different interpretations, needs to be explained. First, voluntary refers to the fact that people choose to associate; "membership is willing, not ascriptive" (Rosenblum, 1998, p. 327) and we are dealing with "choices within contexts that offer alternatives" (Warren, 2001, p. 102). This criterion helps to demarcate voluntary association; other social relations exist that can be considered (predominantly) *involuntary*, such as the state or the family. Weber (1968) uses the term *compulsory associations* for this, and also includes churches as on them.

The degree to which participation in church is voluntary is a matter of dispute. In some countries, church membership is almost ascribed or is encouraged by strict norms; in others, church membership is more of a choice between alternatives.

Furthermore, church membership is different from involvement in religious organizations, which has a more voluntary character. In general, the degree of *voluntariness* goes up with the extent of involvement: "actual participation in religious activities [...] rather than mere stated affiliation, is even more clearly voluntary action" (Smith, 1975, p. 249).

Although freedom of association is crucial, it is not unproblematic. In principle, the freedom to associate necessarily implies freedom to exclude (Rosenblum, 1998), and many examples exist where voluntary associations exclude as well as include (Bourdieu, 1986; Gutmann, 1998). Maintaining certain privileged positions can be a rationale for groups to associate (see "The problem of selection", section 2.3), as well as reacting against others' opinions, beliefs, or tastes. Skocpol (2003) gives a good example, which also warns against too nostalgic or simplistic images of voluntary associations in the past. In the 1950s, the pamphlet "What It Means to Be an Elk" stated: "Membership in the Order is limited to white male citizens of the United States [...] who believe in the existence of God [and] who subscribe themselves to the objects and purposes of the order" (p. 180). Moreover, entering an association usually involves *entry costs*, which range from the payment of contributions to symbolic barriers that require conformation to the group's "way of doing things". These barriers may result in participatory inequalities, or differences in the possibilities of becoming involved for certain groups (which are analyzed in chapter 9).

A second meaning of "voluntary", which is slightly different from the previous one, is the freedom to exit an association: "associations do not keep their members cut off […] [they] have a real choice of discontinuing affiliation" (Rosenblum, 1998, p. 64). Thus, voluntary association is a type of organization in which members are free to end their participation if they wish to do so. Criminal organizations are thereby excluded, as the threat of death or physical harm may make leaving a non-option. Nonetheless, to cancel one's membership of a voluntary association also means making certain sacrifices; similar to entry costs, there may be exit costs involved (Warren, 2001). By ending their involvement, people may cut off certain social ties, or they may be excluded from services. Voluntary then implies that leaving the association should lead to no more than reasonable exit costs. What can be considered "reasonable" is obviously highly disputable, but by way of common sense it can be argued that people's exit should at least not endanger their security or livelihood.

A third aspect of voluntariness is the lack of coercive power that dictates or prohibits certain behavior; activities within voluntary associations are "voluntary in the dual sense of being free of coercion and being free of the economic constraints of profitability and the distribution of profits" (Wuthnow, 1991, p. 7). This is related to Warren's means of social coordination (discussed above); people are not told what to do, but agree about what should be done by way of collective decisions. However, the lack of coercion has practical limitations. To take care of everyday

business, "functionaries" are assigned periodically, with the authority to take certain decisions (Jolles, 1963, p. 15), who are typically members of a board, which is elected (and controlled) by a annual general meeting. In the everyday practice of the association, sanctions may be executed when certain tasks are not accomplished. When members fail to do their (voluntarily chosen) duties, others will address them, or they may run the risk of being fined or excluded.

Summarizing, voluntary association can be described as an ideal type of social organization, with interactions and bonds of intermediate strength, which mainly serve rational considerations about common goals, and which are guided by established procedures and rules. Voluntariness refers to the freedom to associate, freedom to exit, and to the lack of coercion.

2.2 Shifts in the Involvement in Voluntary Associations

After the theoretical discussion in the previous section, this section is empirical. First, I will discuss previous research on changes in participation at the aggregate level, and subsequently, I will discuss changes in the character of voluntary association participation. The empirical analyses in chapters 3, 4, and 6 contribute to the discussion below.

Declines and Increases in Membership Rates: Empirical Evidence

A fair share of the discussion about voluntary association participation concerns issues of in- and decreases in memberships, with emphasis on the latter. According to Paxton (1999), the worry about people's participation in associations, their involvement in politics and their communities, and their willingness to contribute to charity and volunteering has been persistent for more than a century. This "decline-of-community thesis" (p. 88) has ranged from "a shift from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft" (at the end of the 19th century) to "waning social capital" (at the end of the 20th century). In fact, a scholar who is first introduced to the topic may be inclined to think that – contrary to de Tocqueville's assertion that Americans are "forever forming associations" – voluntary associations are forever declining. Similarly, Thomson (2005) points out the parallels between the current social capital debate and "mass society theory" in the 1950s, which he refers to as "the theory that won't die" (p. 421). Overlooking the empirical studies of the past decades in many Western countries, the degree to which associational involvement is declining seems to be a matter of much dispute. I will discuss some of these publications before coming to the somewhat surprising conclusion that in the end there may be more agreement than is often thought.

The publications by Putnam (1995a, 1995b, 2000) have added extensive empirical information to the debate and are a reference point to many scholars. He claims that social capital (see section 2.6) has declined strongly in the United States

after the 1960s, and that this is mostly due to cohort replacement. The "long civic generation" (2000, p. 254) – born between 1910 and 1940 – showed exceptionally high levels of civic involvement; every younger cohort thereafter showed lower levels of participation. Although a few exceptions exist, this decline manifested itself in all the parts of what Putnam considers to be social capital: activities in voluntary associations, political involvement, religious participation, informal sociability, trust, reciprocity, and altruism, among others. Interestingly, the celebrated 1950s was not the only period where associational activity peaked; around 1900 (after a period of 40 years of increased participation) the number of associations per capita was also very high (Gamm & Putnam, 1999). Thereafter, their number stagnated and declined.

The claim of waning social capital has given rise to much research, both in – and outside the US. Starting with the former, the empirical evidence seems ambiguous. Paxton (1999) concluded from trend analyses that generalized trust decreased, but that institutional trust and participation in associations (comprised of both formal and informal types) did not decline. Others have come to similar conclusions; membership rates have not declined in general and there is a great diversity in the trends of specific types of associations (Fischer, 2005; Rotolo, 1999). Others confirm Putnam's conclusions, e.g., Skocpol (2003) concludes in a historical analysis that several aspects of classic civic America have disappeared and – like Putnam – she makes a plea for reinventing American civic democracy.

The dispute about trends in associational involvement seems a bit peculiar at first sight, especially since most of these scholars base their conclusions (or at least partly) on the same data: the General Social Survey (GSS). It is unlikely that differences in operationalization (especially harmonization of the items) are the reason for the diverging conclusions, since (unlike many other surveys) the items on associational participation in the GSS are designed to produce adequate time series (Morales, 2002). It is more likely that the dispute results from a confusion of concepts; differences arise when *passive* and *active* kinds of involvement are distinguished.[2] When studying undifferentiated memberships, the GSS shows a decrease in neither the average number of memberships nor the percentage of the population with at least one membership. Putnam also signals this: "The short answer is that formal membership rates have not changed much" (2000, p. 59). However, he continues by arguing that we should not look at formal membership, but at active participation, and shows that this kind of participation has gone down considerably (based on data of the DDB Needham Life Style Survey). This has been found in other data also; time budget studies showed that (as from 1975) Americans have decreased the amount of time they spend on participation in "civic associations" (Andersen, et al., 2006).

[2] In many discussions and literature overviews the importance of this distinction is insufficiently recognized, in my opinion.

The findings of studies outside the US have not been fully consistent either. Halpern (2005) presents an overview and concludes that membership rates and informal social participation have gone down the strongest in the US and Australia; Britain, Germany and France occupy an intermediate position; Sweden, the Netherlands, and Japan have shown stable or increasing levels of participation. Using different data, Dekker and Van den Broek (2005) find similar patterns[3]. Rothstein (2001) also concludes that membership figures in Sweden show stable levels of participation, which is also true for other Scandinavian countries (Rothstein & Stolle, 2003). Despite the country differences, trends in some specific associations seem to be uniform; participation in religious organizations, women's organizations, trade unions and political parties has declined virtually everywhere (Halpern, 2005; Putnam, 2002). On the other hand, a contradicting trend is also observed in many countries: "there has been a near-universal rise in the cheque-book-based memberships of environmental and other special interest groups" (Halpern, 2005, p. 222).

The term cheque-book membership is used to indicate participation in specific organizations – such as those that aim at improving human rights or raising awareness about environmental problems – where face-to-face interaction among members is scarce or lacking. Although scholars are often pessimistic about this development, Jordan and Maloney (2007) point out that cheque-book membership can also be a "purposive activity", which is guided by the belief that one's financial support to these organizations is a more effective way of contributing to a certain cause than (one's own) voluntary action. Although support of these organizations may indeed be an effective way to achieve collective aims, another important feature is lacking: voluntary associations based on passive membership do not produce internal effects. Since there is no interaction between members, the mechanisms that produce these effects (section 2.4) do not operate.[4]

In the Netherlands – which is the research case in four of the empirical chapters in this dissertation – most of Halpern's *universal trends* can also be observed. Churches, women's organizations and political parties have shown decreasing membership rates (De Hart, 2005). Participation figures of trade unions show stable levels, but that should be interpreted as a decline since the size of the labor force has increased. These downward trends set in only after or during the 1980s, roughly two decades after the start of the developments in the US as sketched by Putnam. The Netherlands has also witnessed a strong rise in cheque-book

[3] The World Values Study (WVS) data they analyze shows a remarkable increase in associational involvement in the US, which is not found in other data. Given the many unexplainable fluctuations in the participation indicators, the validity of the WVS data seems a concern. See Morales (2002) for more warnings about measurement problems in participation indicators.

[4] This is the main reason why this type of participation is hardly examined in the current study.

memberships, notably in organizations dealing with abortion/ euthanasia, nature and environment, and (international) solidarity issues.

It is important to keep in mind the time period under study when comparing empirical findings; when data until 1995 are used voluntary association activity seems to be stable or rising (Andersen, et al., 2006; De Hart & Dekker, 1999), whereas after the inclusion of data between 1995 and 2005, participation seems to have declined slightly, since around 1990 (De Hart, 2005; Dekker, et al., 2007; Van den Berg & De Hart, 2008). Again, the differentiation between types of voluntary associations shows that the picture is diverse; Bekkers (2004) concludes that preferences for associational types have changed: participation in secular associations grew at the expense of participation in "pillarized" associations.

In summary, when aggregate membership rates are examined few researchers report substantial declines. However, this may conceal changes underneath: *active involvement* in voluntary associations – which is crucial for the production of internal effects – has been found to decline in several countries.

The Changing Character of Voluntary Associating

Some of the remarks in the previous section already hinted at the importance of changes besides trends in membership figures. Shifts in the nature of participation and shifts in participation in specific organizations seem to exist, which are trends towards more *passive* participation in terms of the types of associations and types of involvement concerned. Additionally, scholars have observed that participation in *informal* kinds of associations is rising.

Studies of political participation have shown a shift from political parties to more informal alternatives: "Participation in informal local groups, political consumerism, involvement in transnational advocacy networks, the regular signing and forwarding of email petitions, and the spontaneous organizations of protests and rallies are just a few examples of the growing importance of informal organization, individualized action, and network mobilization" (Stolle, et al., 2005, p. 250). Others have argued that new types of citizens are on the rise, such as the "everyday maker" (Bang & Sorensen, 2001), the "monitorial citizen" (Schudson, 1998), and the "political consumer" (Stolle, et al., 2005). These examples indicate that formal (organizational) participation is losing ground but that political activity as such is not necessarily disappearing. Alternative activities include examples that are more individualistic, on demand, incidental, and often organized around one issue.

Informal alternatives of voluntary associations also exist outside the domain of politics. The *support group* is one of these examples, and according to Wuthnow (1994) participation in these groups is rapidly growing. As part of a broader "small-group movement", support groups have informal settings in which people voluntarily provide others with information, tips, shared experiences, and emotional support, mostly concerning issues such as diseases, disorders, addictions, or mental problems. The field of leisure is also an important domain of informal groups (see

chapter 4), described by Newton (1999) as "[those] loose and amorphous networks of individuals who come together on a casual basis and at irregular times to play darts, talk about football, discuss a novel, raise consciousness, offer mutual support, or play a scratch game of football in the park" (p. 11). According to Putnam, leisure activities are increasingly performed in informal groups instead of clubs, such as in the example of bowling: "Any observant visitor to her local bowling alley can confirm that informal groups outnumber solo bowlers [...] On the other hand, league bowling, by requiring regular participation with a diverse set of acquaintances, did represent a form of sustained social capital that is not matched by an occasional pickup of the game" (Putnam, 2000, p. 113).

The latter citation reflects worries about the nature of voluntary association alternatives and the extent to which they could possibly bring about similar internal effects. Although I currently do not know a study that compares effects of participation in voluntary associations with informal groups, there are some obvious differences, with theoretical implications. First, informal groups have less obligations and rules, and are more flexible (Wuthnow, 1994). This may especially serve those participants who do not have the time for long-lasting or demanding forms of involvement, and as a result prefer "loose connections" over permanent commitment to an organization (Wuthnow, 1998). Second, informal groups do not have the organizational framework of voluntary associations, they are "defined *by* the ties between individuals", whereas formal associations "survive beyond any particular member" (Paxton, 1999, p. 100). The composition of the company may also be different; informal group members are mostly drawn from personal – and often homogeneous – networks. As a result, it is unclear to what extent informal groups produce effects similar to those of voluntary associations, although some qualitative and theoretical studies indicate that there are a considerable number of similarities (Crossley, 2008a; O'Conner, 2007; Schudson, 2006).

Informal social interaction usually takes place in the private sphere. Some scholars suggested that people have increasingly turned towards these more private circles of family and close friends, at the expense of voluntary associations: "contemporary Americans no longer needed to rely on the clumsy institutions of their grandparents to organize their social lives – instead they could pick up the telephone and see their friends for dinner" (Halpern, 2005, p. 205). Similarly, social contacts "at a distance" have been claimed to substitute associational contacts. On the one hand, people's working-, family-, and social lives have become increasingly scattered over different places (Castells, 2000; Wellman, 2001), which may have changed social participation (Glanville, 2004; Putnam, 2000; Ryan, Agnitsch, Zhao, & Mullick, 2005). On the other hand, technological innovations have emerged – such as email, instant messaging, text-messaging, friends-of-friends networks, skype, and other applications – which facilitate easier social interaction at a distance. However, it is still hard to judge the value of this type of social participation, as the current studies are quite fragmented (Ester & Vinken, 2003; Hlebec, Lozar

Manfreda, & Vehovar, 2006; Wellman, Quan Haase, Witte, & Hampton, 2001). In chapter 3 different forms of social participation in the Netherlands are studied empirically.

Changes in the character of voluntary association participation may also occur inside existing associations. According to Selle and Stromsnes (2001), the core elements of civic participation – volunteer work and associational activities – are going through several quantitative and qualitative changes, in which the gaps between volunteers ("amateurs") and professionals are widening, and involvement is becoming more "on demand", incidental, and organized around a single issue. Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) claim that a "reflexive style" of volunteering – driven by individual preferences and shaped through occasional involvement – is emerging next to the old model of "collective style" volunteering. On the whole, "present-day volunteer efforts appear to occur on a more sporadic, temporary, and non-committal basis" (p. 168).

2.3 Determinants of Participation, Driving Forces of Change, and Selection

Many factors influence voluntary association participation and most of these factors have been well-known for decades, such as the effects of religiosity, education, and age. Merely reproducing these factors in this dissertation would add little to our knowledge. However, there also remains to be explained regarding the determinants of participation. In chapter 5, the relation between leisure activities and civic participation is examined, which has not been researched extensively in previous research. Additionally, chapters 6 and 7 investigate to what extent some of the well-known determinants of voluntary association participation vary through time and across countries.

Determinants of participation are obviously also possible driving forces behind participation trends, as their distribution in the population is usually subject to change.[5] In the search for explanations of trends, scholars therefore usually examine those determinants that have gone through substantial change.[6] The current section provides an overview of the most important determinants in the current literature (divided into structural and cultural characteristics) and subsequently discusses "the problem" of selection.

[5] Which is not always the case; the "distribution" of gender, for instance, is not likely to change.

[6] Changed population characteristics (in a broad sense, also including values, attitudes, and skills) are not the only explanations for trends; historical events (such as the attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001) may also be of influence, for instance.

Structural Characteristics

One of the most important structural factors determining voluntary association participation and changes in that participation is education. Empirically, all modes of associational involvement (membership, participation, volunteering, donating) are positively related to educational level (Gesthuizen, Van der Meer, & Scheepers, 2008). Several complementary explanations exist for its effect: "The significance of education lies in the fact that it promotes the acquisition of all three forms of resources: civic skills, social connections, and civic values" (Oesterle, Kirkpatrick Johnson, & Mortimer, 2004). Civic skills provide people with the possibilities to become involved, civic values with the willingness to become involved, and extensive social networks increase the chance of being asked to become involved (Fuchs & Klingemann, 1995; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995).[7] Additionally, people's income – which is also a determinant of associational participation – is related to education.

Civic skills are those capacities that facilitate interactions with (groups of) others, such as the ability to organize meetings, plan activities, arrange facilities, discuss and communicate, and express one's opinion. Civic values and "civic-mindedness" (Lichterman, 2005) usually refer to pro-social ideas, general interest in society, and awareness of other people's problems, which are all enhanced through education (Gesthuizen, 2006; Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder, 2005). Social networks are important because the decision to become involved is influenced by recruitment efforts: "recruitment, or requests for activity, seems to act as a catalyst for participation among those with the wherewithal and desire to become active" (Verba, et al., 1995, p. 16). The highly educated have greater chances of knowing other volunteers than those with a low education, because their social networks are larger and contain more highly educated people (who have greater chances of involvement) (McPherson, Popielarz, & Drobnic, 1992; Wilson & Musick, 1998). Furthermore, social networks facilitate a flow of information; people hear about opportunities for associational participation or hear about others' positive experiences.

Since the average educational level has risen over the past decades in the Netherlands and other Western European countries, one would expect (ceteris paribus) a growth in associational involvement accordingly (Bekkers, 2004; Gesthuizen, et al., 2008). According to most empirical research, this was not the case however, which means that either other things were not equal (and there are reasons to expect this) or that the effect (size) of education diminished. Both possibilities will be explored in this dissertation (chapter 5).

Income is another determinant of voluntary association participation, which is a resource both at the micro and macro level. The mechanisms are straightforward;

[7] Theoretically, it is plausible that the causal relationships go both ways, these factors can be causes and consequences of participation (see section 2.5 for that discussion).

most voluntary associations have entry costs such as membership fees, or additional costs for traveling, meals, or materials. This restricts the poor in their possibilities of participation. A certain standard of living seems to be necessary to consider becoming involved in voluntary associations; lack of skills and especially the concern with everyday problems were found to keep the poor away from participation (Warr, 2006). Resources accumulate in this respect; the ones who benefit from voluntary association participation (by enlarging their social networks or enhancing their skills) are the ones with the best resources in the first place (Ruiter, 2008), which means that middle class groups gain more from civic engagement than working class groups (Li, Savage, & Pickles, 2003). On the macro level, following Inglehart's (1997) ideas about modernization processes, the economic development of countries is important; when countries become more affluent, more people have the means to participate, and in turn, a voluntary association infrastructure emerges that is beneficial to all.

Gender and the life course are also structural factors that influence voluntary association participation. Women are often found to be less involved in voluntary associations (Paxton, Kunovich, & Hughes, 2007). Obviously, cultural elements are important sources of gender differences as well; norms about gender roles and women's emancipation are likely to influence associational involvement (see next section). However, gender differences can also appear more structural, as the resource of time is highly determined by "such life circumstances as having a job, a spouse who works, or children, especially preschool children" (Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 1999, p. 433). Since raising children and managing the household are still dominantly done by women, this restricts their possibilities. However, having a family does not only restrict associational involvement. According to Wilson (2000), people with a partner are more likely to volunteer than those without one. This is mainly caused by a network effect; people are drawn into civic participation by their partners, and volunteering can even be "[...] organized by and around family relations" (p. 225). Similarly, children may encourage associational involvement (Rotolo, 2000; Rotolo & Wilson, 2007; Wilson & Musick, 1997), when parents are drawn into associational involvement through the membership of their children (e.g., in clubs), or through connections and activities at their schools.

Other life course differences also relate to associational participation (Wilson, 2000; Wilson & Musick, 1997). A 'rise and fall' of participation over the life-cycle is often found; Jennings & Stoker (2004) found that involvement in voluntary associations steadily increased until middle-age and then gradually decreased again. Others have suggested that a pattern is emerging nowadays in which the elderly are becoming more and more active (Knulst & Van Eijck, 2006). Older people will typically have more discretionary time, as obligations of work and family life have disappeared, and possess relevant skills and knowledge, resulting from life's experiences with work, running a household, and possibly, previous civic

participation, which makes them suited candidates for volunteering or other active organizational tasks.

Employment was also found to affect associational involvement. Putnam (2000) argues that "it *increases opportunity* for making new connections and getting involved, while at the same time it *decreases time* available for exploring those opportunities" (p. 194). In other words, through work, people expand their networks and increase possibly relevant skills, which should be positively related to the selection into associational involvement. On the other hand, the relationship with intensity of involvement should be the opposite; the non-employed have more time available on average, which makes it less costly for them to spend a considerable number of hours on associational participation. Differences within the group of non-employed are also likely; some may have alternative sources of integration (students, homemakers), and some may have more time available then others (pensioners, the unemployed).

Finally, technological innovations are claimed to affect people's level of social participation. Notably television is accused of driving people away from involvement in their communities, voluntary associations and other forms of public life (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Putnam, 2000). Negative correlations exist between time spent on watching television and social participation, and since the former has increased steadily over the pasts decades, it may have contributed to the decline of social capital (Putnam, 1995b). However, the causal mechanisms in this relationship are unclear. People may decide not to spend time on associational participation (for whatever reason), and television watching may be an easy way to fill the open hours. In that case, watching TV is a consequence. On the other hand, two explanations have been offered why watching TV would *cause* a retreat from social participation. The "mean world hypothesis" (Uslaner, 1998) states that watching television makes people less trusting and more anxious, and in turn less inclined to become involved. As far as I know, this argument still awaits a solid empirical test. The other explanation is that watching television causes certain psychological states that discourage social participation. Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi (1990) found that watching TV lowered activation and alertness, and that there was a passive spillover, i.e. people were less (socially) active after they had watched TV.[8] In turn, this may cause a lower inclination to participate in associations.

Cultural Characteristics

Several cultural factors exist that affect people's associational preferences. Especially religiosity is important and often found to affect participation (Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006; Uslaner, 2001; Van Oorschot, Arts, & Gelissen, 2006). Possibly,

[8] They also found support for the idea that watching TV is a response to a desire to be inactive: lower affect (as indicate by the items friendly, happy, cheerful, sociable) earlier in the day was a good predictor for watching TV later on.

this is the result of the fact that religions often propagate pro-social values and that religious organizations are usually considered to be part of the voluntary association spectrum. The degree to which religiosity also encourages involvement in non-religious associations is less clear, and may also be different according to religious denomination (Wilson & Janoski, 1995). Additionally, belonging to a religious community may expand people's networks and the chances of being asked to volunteer.

In the case of the Netherlands, pillarization[9] has been an important societal process in the past decades. As a result of this pillarization, many voluntary associations came in a Protestant, Roman-Catholic, social democratic, and liberal flavor, and the (average) inclination to join associations was different among the pillars (De Hart, 2001). When processes of secularization and "depillarization" set in (which were quite strong in the Netherlands), this should have influenced trends in associational participation. However, the current empirical evidence seems to indicate that only strongly religious and pillarized voluntary associations suffered from a considerable loss of members (Bekkers, 2004). In general, "secularization [has] not resulted in the irrelevance of the churches from the perspective of social capital and the democratic quality of Dutch society" (De Hart & Dekker, 2005, p. 192).

Women's emancipation and norms regarding gender differences are also important. According to Skocpol (1999), women in the US were stimulated in volunteering and activity in their communities through a combination of being supposed not to enter the labor market on the one hand, and possession of good social and organizational skills (as a result of their education) on the other hand. This may be one of the reasons why women's social networks are still found to be different from men's; they are generally smaller and contain more kin and neighbors, and less friends and co-workers (Lin, 2000). Stolle et al. (2005) found that women are more involved in informal and individualized forms of political participation than men. As women's emancipation progresses, one would expect these differences to fade and eventually disappear. Some empirical evidence exists that supports that the gender gap in voluntary association involvement is narrowing, but it also shows that women still participate less on average (Paxton, et al., 2007; Wollebaek & Selle, 2005).

Other changes in people's values may have affected associational participation also. According to Inglehart (1997), driven by high levels of existential security and the rise of the service economy, values concerning quality-of-life, environmental protection, self-expression, and self-development have gained importance. Younger cohorts experienced less existential threats and greater

[9] Which can be defined as a vertical segmentation of society, in which many institutions came in different, segregated versions (Protestant, Roman-Catholic, social democratic, and liberal).

affluence in their formative periods than their predecessors, and as a result, they take survival for granted and focus on "higher needs" (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). This means that the influence of modernization processes on associational involvement is twofold: the shift from traditional to secular-rational values has discouraged associational involvement (especially volunteering), whereas the shift from survival values to self-expression values has encouraged it (Inglehart, 2003).

As a result of these cultural changes, the autonomy and responsibility of individuals in shaping their own lives has increased, and the role of traditions and institutions has diminished (Bauman, 2002; Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Accordingly, people may also no longer take the fixed structure of voluntary associations for granted. Hustinx (2005) concludes that, the more "individual, short-lived, noncommittal, and highly results-oriented volunteer involvement" is the result of "broader modernization and individualization processes" (p. 624). Furthermore, people may no longer accept weekly associational activities on a set day and time, but demand action when they need it. And they may want to regularly switch between memberships instead of staying committed to an association for life.

The Problem of Selection

As the previous sections have shown, the composition of voluntary associations does not represent the population at large; there is selectivity in many different ways. Empirical research has convincingly shown that participation in voluntary associations tends to accumulate with (successful) participation in other domains, such as work, education, and religion. Furthermore, there is inequality in participation in terms of gender, race, and class (Jacobs & Skocpol, 2005; Li, et al., 2003; Paxton, et al., 2007; Wuthnow, 2002). It seems that "the rich get richer" (e.g. Schlozman, et al., 1999; Wilson, 2000); people with better incomes and skills and more extensive social networks often have leading positions in voluntary associations and organizations. This contradicts the democratic ideals of the schools-of-democracy thesis (see next section). De Tocqueville argued that voluntary associations educate citizens about their dependence on others (Warren, 2001), but this is not very helpful if it only concerns a selective group, which does not need the "education" in the first place. This selectivity is especially in conflict with democratic ideals when it results from unequal chances of becoming involved; when non-participation is freely chosen it is usually not considered problematic. In some cases selective participation is seen as something positive, e.g., when it concerns the mobilization and representation of ethnic minorities (or otherwise under-privileged groups). This type of selective participation is considered to be valuable for democracy. The issue of participatory inequality (and its relation with the welfare state) is be the topic of chapter 7.

Selectivity can either be unintended or the result of deliberate intentions to exclude. Although inclusion qualities are often emphasized in scholarly work, voluntary associations can exclude as well as include (Rosenblum, 1998). In the

reasoning of Bourdieu (1986 [1979]), voluntary association participation is an instrument to maintain privileged positions for individuals and families. Social capital[10] can be "a capital of social connections, honourability, and respectability that is often essential winning and keeping the confidence of high society" (p. 122). Membership in a voluntary association in this sense is not a matter of unconcerned interaction but becomes a way to distinguish between the "right" and "wrong" contacts, and to become exposed to people who hold similar status positions. Moreover, upper class societies do not have to be the only associations in which these processes occur; the choice for a sports clubs, for example, can be strongly associated with social background, such as the case of hockey (high income) versus cycling (mixed or lower income) in the Netherlands (Van der Meulen, 2007).

Selectivity may cause voluntary associations to be rather homogeneous in terms of sociodemographic background of the members, although types of voluntary associations vary strongly in their degree of heterogeneity (Coffé & Geys, 2007b).[11] In the research on social networks, it is almost axiomatic that people look for similar others to make up their company (Mollenhorst, Völker, & Flap, 2008a); people show a tendency towards homogeneity in their personal networks (Feld, 1982; Fischer, 1982). Apart from the fact that selectivity in participation does not suit democratic ideals, it is also problematic for some of the effects participation is expected to produce (see next section). In the absence of heterogeneous voluntary associations the effects that presume a relatively heterogeneous composition would be lacking too.

2.4 Effects of Voluntary Association Participation

In this section, effects of voluntary association participation will be examined. More specifically, we will address internal effects: consequences of associational experiences for the individual members, which occur as side-effects. These effects can be ordered (as will be done in the next section) on a continuum ranging from effects that are favorable for the individual member to effects that are favorable to the wider society. The effects that are studied in the empirical analyses of this dissertation (chapters 8 and 9) are chosen to reflect the variety of these topics. The current section will discuss previous research about the effects of associational involvement and ideas about how these outcomes emerge.

[10] See section 2.6 for the different meanings of social capital

[11] Unfortunately, there is a risk of ecologically fallacy; the types that were found to be heterogeneous may still be homogeneous on the level of actual associations. E.g., participation in separate men's and women's choirs may appear as participation in heterogeneous cultural associations on the aggregate level.

What are the Benefits of Voluntary Association Participation?

On the one end of the spectrum of effects of voluntary association participation are those that mainly favor the individual member. For some, these are the most prominent (internal) effects: "Voluntary action is [...] characterized primarily by the seeking of psychic benefits (e.g. belongingness, esteem, self-actualization)" (Smith, 1975, p. 247). Moreover, Rosenblum (1998) argues that "individuals need some place where their values and opinions are affirmed, their contributions acknowledged, where the likelihood of failure is reduced and they find support against lurking self-doubt", and "[...] voluntary associations provide these contexts" (p. 184). In addition to these psychological effects, there are instrumental outcomes that benefit the individual participant. E.g., volunteering has been claimed to be good for one's physical and mental health (Wilson, 2000). Although it is plausible that selection effects play a role in this relation, recent empirical evidence also indicates a causal effect of volunteering on well-being (Piliavin & Siegl, 2007). Associational involvement has also been found to be instrumental in an economic sense: participation at young age contributes to higher income in later life (Baer, 2006) and better jobs (Ruiter, 2008).

Chapter 9 examines one of these kinds of outcomes: growth in social resources. The current literature is not clear regarding the role of associational participation in the generation of social resources,[12] although the mechanism that causes the effect is intuitive: when people join an association, they will meet people they did not meet before, and start interacting with these people through the associations' activities. These repeated interactions will create bonds and relationships and may eventually result in social resources. In this sense, voluntary associations may form part of the supply side of potential contacts; researchers have argued that people generally only consider a limited set of potential friends and acquaintances based on the social contexts they participate in (Feld, 1982, 1984; Mollenhorst, et al., 2008a).

Voluntary associations may have a special position compared to other contexts because of the nature of their activities and freely chosen participation, which create "[...] opportunities for positive experiences with others under the 'controlled' circumstances of shared interest" (Anheier & Kendall, 2002, p. 350). Furthermore, self-categorization emerges when choosing which association to join, and as a result, participants are likely to view fellow members as part of an "in-group" (Zmerli, 2007), or set of likeminded people, which stimulates friendship formation. On the other hand, there are arguments against a powerful role of voluntary associations. Social resources are mostly produced by strong ties from individuals' most nearby social circle. The resulting contacts from associational

[12] This is operationalized in chapter nine as nearby social networks people rely on in their everyday lives for support and comfort.

involvement are more likely to be weak ties, as a result of the modest time that is spent on participation (on average).

Other effects of voluntary association participation have consequences beyond the individual member and favor society in a larger way. A well-known example is generalized trust, or "an abstract preparedness to trust others and to engage in actions with others" (Stolle, 2001, p. 205), which is claimed to facilitate all kinds of social processes, such as economic transactions, but also the enhancement of safety, and functioning of government (Anheier & Kendall, 2002; Putnam, 1993, 2000). Voluntary association participation has been found to enhance generalized trust, although the causal direction in the relation seems to go both ways (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Claibourn & Martin, 2000; Jennings & Stoker, 2004; Paxton, 2007). Other effects in this category are: increased inter-ethnic contact and increased societal integration by ethnic minorities (Van der Meulen, 2007), and the stimulation of democratic values and attitudes, such as tolerance (Mutz, 2006).

The political socialization effect of voluntary associations, which is studied in chapter 8, is also among these kinds of effects. It is also known as the *schools-of-democracy* hypothesis, which basically states that associational involvement stimulates political interest and skills and boosts political action. In their classical work *The Civic Culture*, Almond and Verba (1965) concluded that – as a result of political socialization – members in voluntary associations are different from non-members in the sense that they (1) "feel more confident of their ability to influence the government", (2) are "more active in politics", (3) are "more 'open' in their political opinions", and (4) are "more committed to democratic values" (pp. 252-265). Researchers have found positive correlations between voluntary association participation and democratic values, political interest and abilities ever since (Bowler, Donovan, & Hanneman, 2003; McFarland & Thomas, 2006; Putnam, 1993; Verba, et al., 1995). Putnam (2000) claims that: "Internally, associations and less formal networks of civic engagement instill in their members habits of cooperation and public spiritedness, as well as the practical skills necessary to partake in public life" (p. 338). These are the outcomes of interactions with fellow members, as one of the main concerns of voluntary associations is "cultivating the disposition to cooperate" (Rosenblum, 1998, p. 59). This involves getting to know people from different backgrounds, bridging gaps in language and customs, appreciation of diversity, tolerance, respect, or, in short, enhancement of democratic values (Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csapo, & Sheblanova, 1998; Hooghe, 2003b). This process of political socialization should in turn lead to increased conventional and unconventional political participation.

How do Effects of Voluntary Association Participation Emerge?

An important part of the discussions about effects of voluntary association participation is the way in which effects are generated. In general, researchers have been more successful in coming up with associational correlates (see the preceding

section) than in convincingly showing causal effects in empirical studies or coming up with mechanisms that explain how effects occur (Stolle, 2001). In this section I will try to bring together the arguments in the current literature about *how* effects emerge.

Crucial in the reasoning about many effects of associational participation is the idea of *spillover*. Following Elster's (1993) reading, this idea can already be found in the works by de Tocqueville. Society comprises four distinct spheres in de Tocqueville's anatomy of social life: family life, economic life, political life, and religion. Spillover occurs when one sphere influences another sphere: "The spillover effect says that if a person follows a certain pattern of behavior P in one sphere of his life, X, he will also follow P in sphere Y" (p. 184).

Translated to associational participation, this means that the activities and interactions within an association may also influence life outside that particular association, thereby creating "beneficial formative effects" (Rosenblum, 1998, p. 48). The spillover can be produced in several ways. First, certain behavior that is adopted in the context of a voluntary association may also be displayed in other domains simply through the force of habit; acting in familiar ways reduces uncertainty about others' responses and other consequences of action. Second, people may acquire skills from their activities in voluntary associations, which facilitate certain action in other domains. Third, the spillover can be produced through mental dispositions. Associational experiences can change certain beliefs (or values, attitudes, or other dispositions), which are generic (that is, they are very basic, underlying various kinds of behavior). These changed dispositions *may* in turn induce accompanying behavior in other domains. They do not *necessarily* lead to certain behavior because there may be conflicting beliefs or different restrictions in these domains.

Although the spillover idea seems plausible, it still does not explain why voluntary associations would be more important than other social contexts. Part of the answer may be that people evaluate activities and interactions more positively than in contexts with less voluntarism. Additionally, the availability of alternatives (other associations, or non-participation) stimulates self-categorization mechanisms, i.e., people select into associations that suit them. As a result, "[...] voluntary associations are very likely to be considered as ingroups or positive reference groups by their members and, consequently, have the potential to exert social influence" (Zmerli, 2007, p. 7). Once internalized, these social norms have persisting effects: "[...] these social norms can unfold a long-lasting effect on the group members' orientations and behavior" (ibid). In other words, the high level of voluntarism translates into an inclination to adjust to the associations' norms. Identification with the group through self-categorization is crucial, however.

Another reason for a special role for voluntary associations is that they bring together heterogeneous crowds; the chance of meeting someone with a different race, gender, or religion may be greater than the chance of meeting those people in

the context of work or the private sphere. However, this assertion is highly contested (Estlund, 2003; McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1987; Van der Meulen, 2007), and still in need of a systematic empirical test.

The fact that the activities within voluntary associations are freely chosen may result in a more positive evaluations and feelings towards those activities than towards non-voluntary activities, and this may positively affect attitudes towards fellow members. Downie, Mageau, and Koestner (2008) found that social interactions are experienced as more pleasant when participants feel competent, autonomous, and related. These criteria seem to fit voluntary association participation quite well. Related to this is the research on the *contact hypothesis*, which examines how certain interactions can positively adjust stereotypes and prejudices, breaking down social categorizations of in- and outgroup (Brewer & Gaertner, 2001; Rothbart, 2001). In the original formulation of this idea, it was argued that this process is stimulated when: (a) integration has the support of authority, fostering social norms that favor intergroup acceptance, (b) the situation has high acquaintance potential, promoting intimate contact among members of both groups, (c) the contact situation promotes equal status interactions among members of the social groups, and (d) the situation creates conditions of cooperative interdependence among members of both groups (Allport, 1954). Voluntary associations meet the criteria well, on the condition that outgroup members are among the participants.

The schools-of-democracy hypothesis (the topic of chapter 8) can also be explained in terms of spillover effects. Voluntary associations can be seen as small scale learning environments (Van Deth, 1997), in which people practice how to deal with fellow members who have different backgrounds and opinions, or practice making contributions to the common good. Through the activities and interaction within the association, people may acquire skills of cooperation, discussion, and organization, which are in turn helpful in political participation (Schlozman, et al., 1999; Verba, et al., 1995). Furthermore, participants' democratic values and trust are enhanced: "De Tocqueville argued that secondary associations draw individuals out of their primary associations, educating them about their dependence upon others" (Warren, 2001, p. 30). In other words, cooperation in associations may cause people to attach greater value to cooperation in general, and evoke more cooperative action in other domains.

Not all effects are based on the spillover mechanism; some are more straightforward. In general, through involvement in the associations' activities, people meet others and develop relationships. These contacts may serve various purposes; for example, they may improve chances of finding a good job (Ruiter, 2008). Or, as examined in this dissertation (chapter 9), they may result in enhanced social resources when the social relations within the voluntary association are carried over to the private sphere (e.g., when they result in friendships).

The strength of for virtually every effect of voluntary association is dependent on the level of involvement:

> The more widespread a person's participation in collective decision-making and the greater her integration into the communication structure, the higher the member's commitment to the association (positive affect, loyalty, and efforts to realize group goals), and the lower the detachment (personal remoteness and feelings of inability to influence collective actions and policies) (Knoke, 1986, p. 8).

Therefore, regular participants should be more likely to show participation effects than passive members, and volunteers should be more likely to show participation effects than regular members.

2.5 Issues of Generalizability and Causality

In the previous section, I deliberately refrained from being very critical about the presumed effects of voluntary association participation, to be able to sketch the arguments systematically. However, there are several theoretical and empirical problems that deserve consideration. Two important ones are issues of generalizability and causality, which not only concern effects of participation but also the other parts of this dissertation. Therefore, they are discussed in a separate section.

Generalizability concerns shifts in the nature of participation, determinants, and effects: "The diversity of purposes and member types under the association label makes it difficult to offer strong, highly generalized conclusions about the state of the association world [...] there are few findings that are likely to fit all types of nonprofit membership associations" (Tschirhart, 2006, p. 535). Aggregate participation figures mask developments in specific kinds of associations, which may also go against the main trend. The full landscape of voluntary associations will always consist of new, emerging types, and older ones that remain stable or are declining; as shown by Gamm and Putnam (1999), this was already the case in the 19th century. Trends in associational involvement are therefore often non-generalizable; participation in religious associations may decrease while participation in secular associations increases, or passive involvement may increase while active involvement decreases. In other words, aggregate participation trends usually offer limited information.

The determinants of participation cannot be generalized easily either. Different kinds of associations bring together different crowds, and these relationships may also be different across countries. Section 2.3 discusses this *participatory inequality* more elaborately.

Finally, different kinds of voluntary associations produce different effects (Stolle & Rochon, 1998). The generalizability of findings in these cases is therefore

very low; not only do associations differ in the extent to which they produce effect X, they may also hardly further effect X while substantially furthering effects Y and Z. Mutz (2006) argues (with regard to political views) that "homogeneous and heterogeneous social contexts serve two different, yet important, purposes" (p. 133), which are encouragement of political action on the one hand and deliberation and tolerance on the other hand. To deal with this diversity, researchers have come up with distinctions between associations regarding their goal, composition, organizational structure, and levels of involvement, among others (Coffé & Geys, 2007b; Donovan, Bowler, Hanneman, & Karp, 2004; Erickson & Nosanchuk, 1990; Selle & Stromsnes, 2001). Although these attempts to enhance our knowledge are praiseworthy, the problem is that they remain very ad hoc; it is unclear which characteristics of associations are important in which cases.

Another important problem in the study of associational involvement is causality. The presumed "outcomes" of associational involvement may just as well be antecedents to associational involvement. In fact, that is often very likely and theoretically plausible (Hooghe, 2002). Additionally, the direction of the effects is often an issue, e.g., participation may stimulate trust, but in turn, may also be stimulated *by* trust. Scholars working in the neo-Tocquevillian tradition are mostly interested in the former, in effects of the *participation treatment*. It is important to disentangle participation and selection effects. Empirically, this can only be done by analyzing panel data (which will be used in chapter 9). However, currently, the vast majority of research on participation is cross-sectional. The few studies with a panel design found both selection and participation effects for the variables under investigation (Jennings & Stoker, 2004; Piliavin & Siegl, 2007).

Since panel data on associational involvement are generally scarce, researchers have tried to come up with solutions using cross-sectional data. One strategy is to model the relation between voluntary association participation and the topic under study both ways (using structural equation models) and to come up with relevant control variables which are different depending on the direction of the relation. The study of participation and trust by Brehm and Rahn (1997) is a standard reference for this type of analytic strategy, in which different partial correlations are calculated, depending on the direction of the effect. However, this method still does *not* give information about causal sequence, and neither excludes selection effects. It is thus quite surprising that the researchers state such strong, causal conclusions. Yet another strategy is to combine cross-sectional analyses with theoretical arguments that give an indication about the direction of the effects (see chapter 8). This strategy can be fruitful, although the validity of the conclusions is obviously dependent on the validity of the theoretical assumptions.

2.6 Social Capital

Although the concept of social capital does not play a key role in this dissertation, much of the research under that rubric concerns voluntary associations. This section therefore explains how the two concepts are related.

As indicated in the introductory chapter, social capital research – as interpreted by Putnam (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) – is part of a research tradition that deals with decline of community (Paxton, 1999; Thomson, 2005). The term is also used in social network research, but with a different meaning (see below). Putnam's definition of social capital is somewhat vague, but it is clear that it encompasses associational participation:

Voluntary cooperation is easier in a community that has inherited a substantial stock of social capital, in the form of norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement. Social capital here refers to features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions. (Putnam, 1993: 167)

The metaphor of capital is used here to indicate the resemblance with other kinds of capital (financial capital, human capital). For instance, it will "increase with use and diminish with disuse" (Putnam, 1993: 170) and "we can 'invest' in networking" (Putnam, 2002: 8). When a sufficient stock of social capital is present there are *profits*, such as safety and productivity in neighborhoods, economic prosperity, proper functioning of democracy, better health and increased happiness (Putnam, 2000). Social capital, in this reasoning, is a *public good* – it is not the property of any of the persons that benefit from it, but an asset of a social structure – and it is often created as a by-product of social activities (Putnam, 1993). In summary, social capital is made up of civic engagement, generalized trust, and norms of reciprocity, and is an asset at the macro level (e.g., of communities, regions, or countries).

Over the past decade, the works of Putnam evoked considerable criticism. One of the critiques is that the interrelations of the elements that are put under one rubric are unclear. Fischer (2005) argues that it would be better to keep on using the constituting elements of social capital independently. Since the correlations between civic engagement, trust, and reciprocity are low or lacking, he concludes that scaling of these items (as one factor) is inappropriate. From a theoretical point of view, it is also unclear why the network- and attitudinal aspects of social capital should be seen as parts of one concept (Stolle, 2001, 2003); the underlying mechanisms that should simultaneously produce civic engagement, trust, and norms of reciprocity remain unspecified. This also results in causality problems: "social capital is simultaneously a cause and an effect. It leads to positive outcomes, such as economic development and less crime, and its existence is inferred from the same outcomes" (Portes, 1998: 19).

Social capital as used by Putnam is different from the use of social capital in social network research. In this tradition, social capital equals the resources that can be mobilized by an individual from his or her social network (Bourdieu, 1986; Flap, 2004; Lin, 2005). In this sense, a friend's bike can be social capital, but also physical and emotional support, money, or useful information. This use of the metaphor of social capital is conceptually more transparent and less incoherent. It is easier to see how one can profit from, and invest in social capital. However, many of the studies in this research tradition are less relevant for my current purpose, as they do not examine voluntary association participation.

In summary, the social capital concept by Putnam is mainly criticized for putting factors together that do not belong together, neither empirically nor theoretically, and the confusion with social network research is inconvenient. Therefore, I will use the term social capital only scarcely in this dissertation.[13] Instead of putting voluntary association participation under one rubric with attitudes and norms, a more fruitful approach is to keep them separated, and make possible interrelations with attitudes or norms subject of (empirical) research. However, when I do use the term social capital, I mean to refer to Putnam's conception.

[13] With the exception of chapter six and when referring to others' work.

Part I: Shifts in the Involvement in Voluntary Associations?

3. Social Participation Revisited: Disentangling and Explaining Period, Life-cycle and Cohort Effects[1]

Abstract

In this analysis of formal and informal social participation in the Netherlands between 1975 and 2000, period, life-cycle and cohort effects are disentangled and the factors that could have driven these changes are examined. Use of diary data enables an assessment of four types of social participation: formal involvement in associations, maintenance of informal contacts within the home and outside the home, and distant social contacts. Our results indicate that several changes have been taking place. A large decrease (of approximately 3 hours per week between 1980 and 2000) is found in the time people spend on social activities within the home (consisting mainly of paying visits and receiving visitors). This trend is connected with increases in work and television watching. Other changes manifest themselves as cohort differences. While younger cohorts show considerably less activity in formal participation, they spend more time on informal social activities outside the home. Decreasing levels of religiosity play a role with respect to both trends.

[1] A slightly different version of this chapter was published in *Acta Sociologica* (Van Ingen, 2008).

3.1 Introduction

Social participation is a topic that has been examined by scholars for centuries. De Tocqueville (De Tocqueville, 2000 [1835]) claimed that people have a natural tendency to look for social connectedness ("After the freedom to act alone, the most natural to man is that of combining his efforts with the efforts of those like him and acting in common") and that sufficient social participation is crucial for democracy. Putnam (2000) extended this reasoning and concluded that not only democracy, but also levels of education, safety, economic development and health are served by proper levels of "social capital". However, instead of being a stable human trait, he claims that the degree to which people interact with others outside the domains of household, education and work has become worrisome over recent decades in the United States. Inspired by this work, several scholars have been researching trends in social participation. However, as I argue in this article, few have done so systematically and to the full extent. As a start to more thorough examinations of social participation, I analyze what period, life-cycle and cohort effects (sometimes referred to as APC analysis) can be found in different types of social participation in the Netherlands and examine factors that could be driving these changes.

By far the most studied types of social participation are memberships of voluntary associations and the performance of volunteer work in these associations. From a time budget perspective, however, this is only one – and moreover a minor – part of people's social participation. As the following sections of this article will show, informal social activities – such as paying visits, receiving visitors, going to parties, bars and restaurants – take up a much larger share of the weekly time budget than formal participation. It is therefore surprising that only a few researchers have been concerned with this informal kind of social participation (Pichler & Wallace, 2007). Only after taking into account the multiple ways in which people participate in social life and the different trends taking place (with possible substituting or complementing relations) can we conclude the extent to which levels of social participation are worrisome. In this article I therefore attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. *What are the observed trends in the amount of time people spent on formal and informal types of social participation in the Netherlands between 1975 and 2000?*
2. *How can these observed trends be disentangled into net life-cycle, cohort and period differences?*
3. *How can these differences be explained?*

Throughout this study, "formal participation" is used to indicate involvement in voluntary organizations or associations which have a distinct legal status and meaning in the Netherlands. According to the law: "A voluntary association is a corporate body with members, aimed at a specific goal", which is not allowed to

distribute profit among its members, and which should have an internal democratic structure (that is: a board controlled by a general meeting) (Kollen, 1995).

Informal participation is distinct from its formal counterpart in the sense that it lacks fixed rules of membership and is more self-organized, causing "[. . .] only the weakest of obligations" (Wuthnow, 1994). Putnam (2000, p. 93) refers to informal social participation as "schmoozing" and gives examples such as "[. . .] getting together for drinks after work, having coffee with regulars at the diner, playing poker every Tuesday night, gossiping with the next-door neighbor, having friends over to watch TV", and many more. Compared to formal participation, informal participation is more spontaneous and flexible (Newton, 1999) and characterized by familiarity and equity, qualities that encourage open communication and "receptiveness" to information and opportunities (Kwak, Shah, & Holbert, 2004). Furthermore, it is an important source of social support (Putnam, 2000).

The Dutch Time Use Survey (DTUS) is used for the analyses in this study. This data set is well suited for the current purpose because it describes, in principle, everything respondents have been doing during the diary week. Moreover, it has been carried out since 1975 (every five years) and has a fair degree of comparability over time, thus enabling a distinction not only between formal and informal social participation, but also between various types of informal participation. Based on the coding of the diary activities, the analyses contain:

- *formal participation (or time spent on activities in various kinds of voluntary associations),*
- *informal social life within the home (mainly visiting and receiving visitors),*
- *informal social life outside the home (consisting of public and semi-public social events such as visits to bars, societies, clubs), and*
- *distant social contacts (writing letters and making telephone calls).*

The trends in the various types of participation are assessed within the same framework: regression analyses that contain separate estimations of life-cycle, period and cohort differences. Each of these effects gives us different information. The division into life-cycle phases represents relatively stable differences between people (although the sizes of these groups may change over time) as a result of their marital status and parenthood. As the analyses will show, these phases have their typical pattern of social participation. Period effects tell us something about the current state of our society and general changes that are taking place. They affect everybody and can be regarded as the "signs of the times". Cohort differences can tell us something about future developments. Often, societal changes are first visible among younger cohorts and to some extent cohorts are assumed to hold preferences through time.

Although the division into life-cycle, period and cohort effects can be helpful in understanding changes, there is still a need for explanation of what drives these

changes. Therefore, in the final part of the article, I test possible explanations from previous research about changes in social participation to see if these can account for the trends that were found. These are: the roles of religiosity, work, television watching, mobility and education.

3.2 Previous Research

In recent years, there has been extensive academic discussion on trends in civic participation, memberships and voluntary work, often referred to as "social capital". Putnam played a major role in highlighting this discussion when stating his well-known "bowling alone" thesis (Putnam, 1995a, 1995b, 2000). Other scholars quickly followed his example by analysing trends in memberships, trust and civic virtues in their own countries, although the results they came up with were rather different. In general, they found no clear decline of civic participation, either in Europe or the United States (Dekker & Van den Broek, 2005; Paxton, 1999; Rothstein, 2001; Rothstein & Stolle, 2003; Rotolo, 1999).

While the main part of the debate on the "decline of community" focuses on voluntary associations, few scholars have explored different directions. In fact, one large part of people's social lives – informal participation – has been relatively under-researched. This is surprising, especially in view of the impact that informal social contacts have on everyday life. One of the reasons could be that scholars consider informal social life as less "dignified" or that they look for participation with "civic" outcomes (the reason Fleischacker (1998) talks – ironically – about "insignificant communities"). Nevertheless, they are important in the development and maintenance of social networks, and, therefore, important in social capital research, too (Newton, 1999). They may also stimulate civic types of engagement, such as getting involved in volunteer or community work (Kwak, et al., 2004). Furthermore, it is not unlikely that the lack of attention is the result of practical problems, such as to the difficulty of "catching" informal participation in questionnaires (Ester & Vinken, 2003; Fleischacker, 1998; Newton, 1999; Stolle & Rochon, 1998).

Some scholars conclude that a more personalized and temporary way of maintaining social contacts drives changes in participation, resulting in new types of participation, often supported by new communication technologies (Eliasoph, 1998; Ester & Vinken, 2003; Fine & Harrington, 2004; Fleischacker, 1998; Glover & Hemingway, 2005; Oldenburg, 1989; Wuthnow, 1994, 1998). For instance, it might be appropriate to speak about "personal communities" (Wellman, 2001) or "loose connections" (Wuthnow, 1998) when discussing engagement these days. Both terms emphasize the persistence of social life, but point at the fact that vicinity and fixed formats are losing in importance.

On the whole, there are very few studies comparing developments in different types of social participation over time. One exception is an analysis by Rothstein (Rothstein, 2001) giving a historical and empirical description of post-war Sweden. Rothstein shows that overall participation in voluntary associations does not decline, and that strong formal social organizations do not necessarily weaken informal social networks. Furthermore, he speculates about a turn from private to public social life, based mainly on a strong increase in visits to restaurants. Another exception is a study by Andersen et al. (2006), in which four countries are compared over time – one of them the Netherlands. They use data from the DTUS and conclude that social participation has only been decreasing in the United States, not in the other countries. However, this study is limited to formal participation.

Explaining Changes in Social Participation

Many explanations have been suggested for changes in social participation. Although meant mainly in reference to formal participation, they can often be applied in the case of informal participation as well. The following review is limited to a brief discussion of the factors used in the empirical analyses.

A "rise and fall" of participation in adult years has been found with respect to life-cycle influences (Jennings & Stoker, 2004), i.e. involvement in voluntary associations and organizations steadily increases until people are middle-aged and then gradually decreases again. Moreover, changes connected with getting married and having children are significant in explaining participation differences (Rotolo, 2000). However, it is not always clear what the consequences of entering a next phase in the life-cycle are. Wilson (2000, p. 225), for example, concludes that "children in the household are both a constraint and an opportunity when it comes to volunteering". Which of the two is applicable depends on the ages of parents and children. According to Rotolo (2000), young children have a positive influence on their parents' participation in voluntary associations, judging from "joining rates" of the young parents. However, leaving rates tend to be higher as well, the effects being strongest among women.

Another set of explanations is based on socialization differences of cohorts (Knulst & Van Eijck, 2006). The main idea is that cohorts, in their upbringing and education, are taught certain values, such as the importance of contributing to the community or helping others, values that are then assumed to have a long-lasting influence on their behavior. For example, the "long civic generation" – born roughly between 1910 and 1940 – is often praised for its all-time high in all kinds of voluntary action (Rotolo & Wilson, 2004). This cohort was succeeded by a post-war generation which, according to Putnam (Putnam, 2000), has been responsible for the onset of a general decline in civic engagement.

In the remainder of this section, five explanations are discussed (developments in the field of religion, mobility, work, television watching and

education) and tested to explain the changes in social participation in the empirical analysis, after life-cycle, period and cohort differences are disentangled.

Wuthnow (1994) claims that any increase in informal connections is in response to dissatisfaction with a "general breakdown of traditional support structures", in turn leading to a "revival of spirituality and sense of community". Related to this is the role of secularization. In general, religiosity is one of the steady factors influencing participation (Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006; Uslaner & Dekker, 2001; Van Oorschot, et al., 2006). As a result of secularization, social participation is expected to decrease not just in religious organizations, but in non-religious organizations as well.

Another explanation comes from the observation that people's working life, family life and social life no longer take place within one community, but increasingly scattered over different places (Castells, 2000; Wellman, 2001). This increase in mobility, indicated by increases in time spent travelling or by the number of people moving recently, will in turn lead to changes in social participation (Glanville, 2004; Putnam, 2000; Ryan, et al., 2005).

Other researchers have looked for explanations from a time budget perspective. As the 24 hours in the day can only be spent once, increases in one activity should go hand-in-hand with decreases in others. In this respect, two suspects accused of increasing time pressure are work and television watching (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Putnam, 2000; Uslaner, 1998). Anderson et al. (2006) concluded that increases in work participation – after more and more women had been entering the labor market – led to decreases in civic engagement in the United States. The evidence on the relationship between increased work and decreased civic participation is not very strong, however. For example, Putnam (1995b) shows that working many hours and doing voluntary work can go hand-in-hand. The reasoning for television watching is the same. Backed up by negative correlations between time spent on watching television and social participation, researchers hypothesize that television drives people away from societal involvement (Putnam, 1995b; Uslaner, 1998).

Finally, increased levels of education are often found to influence social participation, mainly through increases in resources (Bekkers, 2004; Dekker, 2004; Fuchs & Klingemann, 1995; Verba, et al., 1995). Through education, people acquire both the networks and the social skills to get involved. As the average educational level rises, accordingly a boost of participation is expected.

A Note on the Netherlands

The profile of social participation in the Netherlands to a large extent resembles that of the Nordic countries, as the average levels of participation are among the highest in the world (Curtis, et al., 2001) and the relationship between the state and voluntary associations is supportive rather than competitive (Van Oorschot & Arts,

2005). Moreover, in a recent publication, Pichler and Wallace (2007) showed that levels of informal participation are among the highest in European countries.

One cannot conclude from studies looking at trends in formal participation that there was a manifest decline in voluntary association membership; developments within a 25-year period show much stability in the percentage of people participating (De Hart, 2005). Evidence from previous research on voluntary work has been mixed; some indicators stable, others showing a decline between 1985 and 2000 (De Hart, 2005; Knulst & Van Eijck, 2006).

With regard to our explanatory variables, many of the developments in the Netherlands have been comparable to those in other Western European countries, developments such as processes of secularization, increased educational levels and increased numbers of women in the labor force. Sometimes, however, these trends have had different effects, e.g. in large measure, women in the Netherlands entering the labor market in part-time jobs (Dekker & Ederveen, 2005).

3.3 Data and Methodology

The data stem from the DTUS,[1] which was held in the Netherlands every five years in the period 1975 and 2000 (Breedveld, 2000). The survey contains a questionnaire and also a diary part. In the latter, respondents keep track of their activities and report what they have been doing every 15 minutes of one week. Every wave, a new sample is drawn representative of the Dutch population over 12 years of age. The data set shows the behavior of virtually all respondents in a factual and detailed fashion, and there is a fair extent of harmonization of the categories across the years. Furthermore, there are indications that these data are less biased by respondents' opinions or ambitions than ordinary surveys are (Van den Broek et al., 2004).

For current purposes, all the waves are pooled within one data set and variables harmonized as far as possible. The data set contains 15,757 respondents. A weight factor was constructed for each year based on the representation of sex, age, occupational status, degree of urbanization, size and type of household and place in the household (Van den Broek, Breedveld, De Haan, De Hart, & Huysmans, 2004).

APC Analysis

The distinction between age, period and cohort effects – sometimes referred to as "APC analysis" – faces several methodological difficulties. Although the theoretical arguments are relatively clear cut, operationalization of the concepts is problematic. There is a technical impossibility in distinguishing between the three – one can always be a composition of the other two (Masche & Van Dulmen, 2004) – or there

[1] Visit http://www.scp.nl/onderzoek/tbo/english/achtergronden/default.htm for more information.

is a problem with "full linear dependence": Age = Period – Cohort (e.g., Glenn, 1976). This makes estimation of the separate effects impossible, e.g. in regression analysis. Several attempts have been made to resolve this problem (Masche & Van Dulmen, 2004; Van den Broek, 1996; Yang, Fu, & Land, 2004), but for the current analysis a different type of solution is applied. Although there is an obvious connection between the two, some authors have shown that life-cycle changes are more important than age per se (Rotolo, 2000) in determining people's participation. Therefore, life-cycle phases are analysed rather than age. As the analyses turned out, there was neither perfect linear dependence nor "near-extreme multicollinearity" (Allison, 1999) in these models, judging from the "tolerance" and "variance inflation factor" values. Therefore, standard errors and the accompanying significance test can be trusted.

When the effects of one element of the life-cycle/period/cohort triangle are controlled for the others, these differences will be referred to as net differences in the remainder of this article. The expression "gross differences" stands for differences without controls.

Dependent Variables

The four types of social participation are counts from people's diaries. Accordingly, the dependent variables represent the time spent on activity X (hours) in the diary week. Respondents reported their activities in accordance with a coding scheme provided beforehand.

- *Formal participation* consisted of "activities leading social, political organizations", "activities for interest groups or politics", "other activities in voluntary associations", "voluntary work, unpaid help to non-relatives", and "activities for religious organizations".
- *Informal participation within the home* consisted of "visiting people", "receiving visitors", and "talking to inmates".
- *Informal participation outside the home* consisted of "visiting a cafe/ bar/ cafeteria/ society/ club, etc.", "going to parties/ weddings/ dinners", and "other events/ receptions".
- *Social contacts at a distance* consisted of "writing letters" and "telephone calls (including cell telephones)".

Independent Variables

Owing to harmonization problems, marital status could not be used for the construction of life-cycle stages. Thus, this was based on position in the household, the age of the respondents, the age of their children and being retired or not, leading to the following categories: (1) Being a child in the household; (2) Having one's own household without children (respondent's age <40 years); (3) Being a parent with children in the household (youngest 0-5 years); (4) Being a parent with children in the household (youngest 6-14 years); (5) Being a parent with children in the

household (youngest 15+ years); (6) Household without children (respondent's age≥ 40 years); respondent is not retired; (7) Household without children (respondent's age≥ 40 years); respondent is retired.

Period effects are captured simply by years of measurement. Coding problems (in the independent variables) during the 1975 survey rendered inclusion of this year in the regressions impossible. Fortunately, analyses of 1975 with slightly different variables showed no discontinuity with respect to the main period effects found.

Cohorts were coded according to year of birth. Cohorts of 5 years are used as a way to balance power (significant differences are found between larger groups in particular) and accurateness of estimation (the more groups the more accurate the description of the overall cohort effect).

Cohorts A, B, C and D (born before 1904) contained very few cases and were omitted.

Intermediate Variables

The intermediate variables, used to test explanations of changes in participation, are measured as follows.

- *Education: 7-point ordinal scale ranging from primary education to university degree.*
- *Religiosity: 9-point scale reflecting the number of church visits per year.*
- *Work: answer to the question how many hours the respondent "usually works" each week.*
- *Television: time spent watching television in the diary week (hours).*
- *Mobility: time spent on all registered travel in the diary week (hours).*

Statistical Model

Ordinary least squares regression was used to estimate the relationships between social participation, on the one hand, and life cycle, period and cohort differences on the other.[2]

The explanations are tested as mediating effects, while controlling for the APC parts not under investigation (see Figure 3.1 for a graphical representation of this setup). For example, when a (net) period effect is found with respect to visiting, the former will be treated as independent variable (X), the latter as dependent (Y),

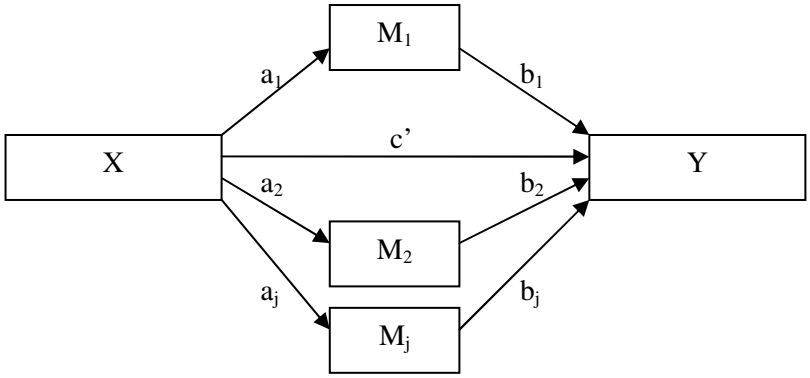
[2] The dependent variables in this research are counts of diary entries, which usually show skewness and a peak at zero in their frequencies (a non-normal distribution). A count regression model (zero-inflated negative binomial regression) was employed to find out whether the results would be much different. This was not the case, judging from the similarities in signs and significance of the estimated coefficients. Moreover, the correlations between the predicted scores of the linear versus the count regression turned out to be quite high (r= 0.80, r= 0.99, r= 0.97, r= 0.94, respectively, for the different participation types). Since the results of OLS regression can be interpreted more easily, and many scholars are unfamiliar with count regression, the output of the former is shown throughout this article.

and the five above-mentioned explanations (education, religiosity, work, television and mobility) as mediators (M_1, M_2, . . . , M_5). Comparing the size of the total effect (c) between X and Y with the indirect effects gives the extent to which the differences can be explained by the mentioned factors. The ratio between the sum of indirect effects and the total effects indicates the percentage that is explained (or $(\Sigma a_j * b_j)/c$).

Elaborations on the "Sobel test" by Preacher and Hayes (2004, 2006) are used for estimating the indirect effects. The extension consists of possibilities to use multiple mediators and covariates in the analysis. Moreover, Preacher and Hayes developed ready-made SPSS macros with both parametric and bootstrap estimation procedures. The test consists of estimation of the a * b paths (Figure 3.1), their accompanying standard errors and confidence intervals.

In these analyses, cohorts were treated as a single continuous variable on the interval [H, R]. The other cohorts were removed because they are less reliable (did not go through many life-cycle stages). The cohort trends approximate linearity on this interval.

Figure 3.1
Model for Multiple Mediation (derived from Preacher and Hayes 2006)



3.4 Results: Different Types of Social Participation

This section elaborates the observed or gross period, life-cycle and cohort differences in social participation. Note that all dependent variables are measured in hours and have decimal fractions.

The first thing to note when looking at Table 3.1 is the huge difference in the weekly time budget share that the types of participation take. By far, most people's social lives consist of informal participation (roughly 9 hours a week inside the

home and 2.5 hours outside). The amount of time people spend on formal participation is modest: in 2000, for example, people spent 1.16 hours a week on these activities. Over the years there has been a modest rise and fall in formal participation. The separate activities are fairly stable through time, although voluntary work shows some fluctuations.

Informal social life connected with the home shows a decline of all three indicators. Moreover, the difference is large: between 1975 and 2000, time spent on domestic social life dropped from 11.27 to 7.78 hours a week. Informal participation outside the home, in contrast to domestic social life, remains stable (with some minor fluctuations). In absolute numbers, time spent on social activities outside the home takes up a smaller part of the week than that within the home: 2.47 versus 7.78 hours a week on average in 2000. However, as the latter dropped, the ratio between social participation within and outside dropped too. Interestingly, the time spent on social contacts at a distance shows a small increase, although the absolute share of the weekly time budget remains very small. The time spent on telephone calls was not measured in 1975; therefore no sum was calculated.

Table 3.1
Time Spent on Four Types of Participation (Hours/Week)

	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Formal Participation						
- Activities social, political organizations	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.04
- Activities for interest groups or politics	0.10	0.08	0.07	0.08	0.10	0.06
- Other activities voluntary associations	0.44	0.48	0.43	0.43	0.46	0.43
- Voluntary work, unpaid help non-relatives	0.39	0.41	0.60	0.47	0.58	0.47
- Activities for religious organizations	0.14	0.20	0.22	0.31	0.24	0.16
	1.14	1.25	1.39	1.34	1.43	1.16
Informal participation within the home						
- Visiting people	5.67	5.22	4.90	4.74	4.73	4.39
- Receiving visitors	2.72	2.74	2.52	2.43	2.18	2.07
- Talking to inmates	2.89	2.62	2.11	2.03	1.64	1.32
	11.27	10.59	9.53	9.21	8.54	7.78
Informal participation outside the home						
- Visiting cafe/ bar/ society/ club etc.	1.25	1.03	1.19	1.28	1.33	1.12
- Going to parties/ weddings/ dinners	0.90	0.90	0.89	0.98	1.01	1.12
- Other events/ receptions	0.26	0.24	0.26	0.23	0.38	0.24
	2.41	2.16	2.34	2.49	2.72	2.47
Social contacts at a distance						
- Writing letters	0.17	0.14	0.21	0.14	0.16	0.11
- Phone calls (including cell phones)	-[a]	0.42	0.50	0.59	0.74	0.72
	-	0.56	0.71	0.73	0.91	0.83

[a] *The time spent on telephone calls was not registered in 1975.*

An overview of gross or observed differences with respect to life-cycle stages is given in Table 3.2. Differences according to the life-cycle can be huge and entering a next stage can mean a positive effect on one and a negative effect on the other type

of social participation. When respondents are a child in the household, they show low levels of social participation, but not for informal participation outside the home. This is unsurprising, as going to bars, clubs and parties is generally known to be mainly youth activity. Starting one's own household does not change this high level of informal participation outside the home, but it does boost informal participation within the home and at a distance. Changes in the latter could indicate that an important share of distant social contacts is between parents and children, because this number goes up when children move out (for both the children and their parents). After starting one's own household, the time spent on informal participation within the home remains fairly stable over the life course.

When children start coming into play, this mainly affects formal participation and informal participation outside the household. The latter drops dramatically and does not recover over the rest of the life course. Formal participation increases, particularly so when the children begin attending school. Involvement in formal participation is also high among the retired.

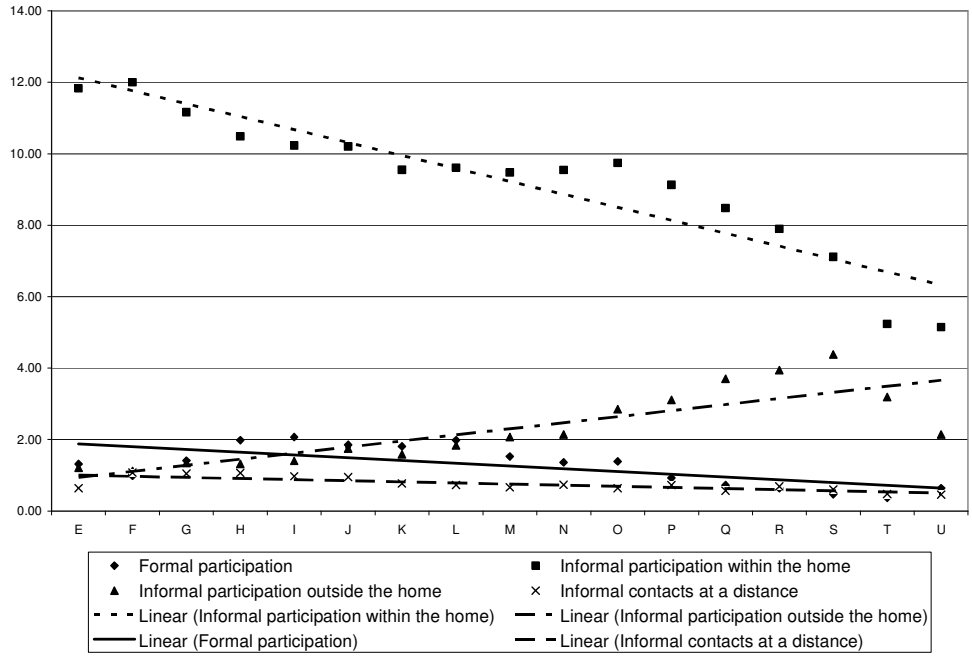
Table 3.2
Observed Formal and Informal Social Participation over the Life-Cycle (Hours)

	Formal	Informal within home	Informal outside home	Informal at distance
Life-cycle stages:				
- Child in household	0.7	6.9	3.9	0.4
- (Own) household (<40 yrs) no children	1.0	10.7	3.9	1.0
- Parent(s) with children in household (0-5 yrs)	1.0	9.7	1.8	0.6
- Parent(s) with children in household (6-14 yrs)	1.8	9.2	1.8	0.7
- Parent(s) with children in household (15+ yrs)	1.6	9.9	1.7	0.7
- Household (≥ 40 yrs) without children; not retired	1.6	10.3	1.7	1.0
- Household (≥ 40 yrs) without children; retired	1.9	10.4	1.3	1.1
Average	1.3	9.4	2.4	0.8

Note. The age in parentheses refers to the respondent's age for households without children and to the age of the youngest child for households with children.

The gross cohort differences are shown in a figure (Figure 3.2) rather than in a table, which enables a more intuitive interpretation. There is a downward trend for formal participation, although cohorts E, F and G show relatively low levels as well. Cohorts H to L (born between 1919 and 1943) are the most active in their participation in voluntary associations. The most obvious trend in the figure is the huge cohort difference in informal social life within the home: the oldest cohort spends more than twice the number of hours of the youngest. This downward trend shows a more or less linear pattern. Informal social life outside the home shows a clear increase over the cohorts. However, the two youngest cohorts (T and U) seem to be an exception to this trend. Finally, there are no clear differences among cohorts with regard to informal contacts at a distance. The small absolute numbers make it difficult to observe this, though.

Figure 3.2
Observed Time Spent on Participation by Cohort (Hours/Week)



3.5 Results: Life-Cycle, Period, and Cohort Effects

Table 3.3 gives the results of the analyses in which life-cycle, period and cohort effects on social participation are mutually controlled. The three blocks of variables were entered one by one. Increases in explained variances were significant for all blocks but the period effect on formal participation. The large sample size contributes to the significance of these effects; not all are of substantive importance.

After controlling for life-cycle and cohort differences, no clear-cut period effect on formal participation was found (although deviations of 1980 and 1995 from the reference group are significant). Adding life-cycle to the model is a significant improvement (1.8 per cent explained variance), but differences between the stages turn out to be small. Especially if the results are compared to the gross differences in the previous section, much of the effect seems to be taken out by the control for cohort. The latter is the most important factor in explaining formal participation differences. The amount of time the cohorts spend follows a specific pattern, with a peak at some of the older cohorts (H-L) and a subsequent downward trend. The net difference between the most and least active cohort (I and R) is

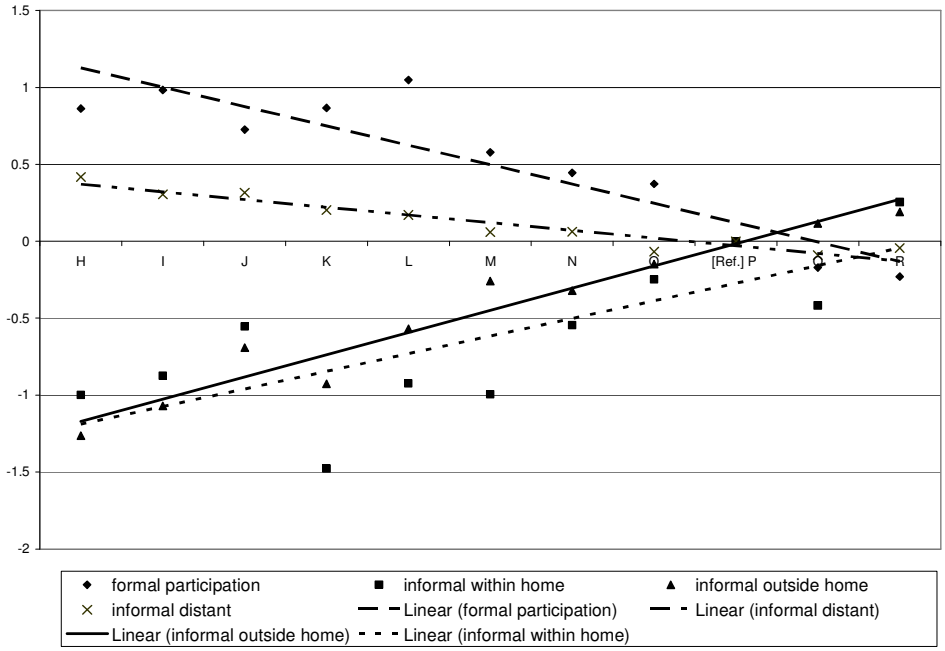
approximately 1 hour and 52 minutes. To facilitate easy interpretation of the cohort trends, the differences for all participation types are plotted in a graph (see Figure 3.3).

Table 3.3
Regression Analyses of Participation Types (OLS Estimated, Unstandardized Beta's)

	Formal	Informal within home	Informal outside home	Informal at distance
Period:				
- 1980	-0.31**	1.67**	-0.06	-0.21**
- 1985	-0.05	0.48**	-0.01	-0.05~
- 1990 (reference)	0	0	0	0
- 1995	0.22*	-0.66**	0.26*	0.20**
- 2000	0.02	-1.61**	0.15	0.12**
Life-cycle stages:				
- Child in household	-0.13	-2.66**	1.99**	-0.13*
- (Own) household (<40 yrs) no children	-0.18	1.35**	1.88**	0.26**
- Parent(s) with children (0-5 yrs)	-0.40**	0.16	-0.23~	0.02
- Parent(s) with children (6-14 yrs) (reference)	0	0	0	0
- Parent(s) with children (15+ yrs)	-0.56**	0.94**	0.31*	-0.09*
- Household (≥ 40 yrs) without children; not retired	-0.57**	1.22**	0.46**	0.20**
- Household (≥ 40 yrs) without children; retired	-0.22	1.20**	0.26	0.11~
Cohorts:				
- Cohort E (1904-1908)	0.52	-1.82**	-1.31**	-0.01
- Cohort F (1909-1913)	0.36	0.28	-1.10**	0.41**
- Cohort G (1914-1918)	0.82**	-0.28	-0.91**	0.35**
- Cohort H (1919-1923)	1.20**	-0.33	-1.04**	0.33**
- Cohort I (1924-1928)	1.38**	-0.54	-0.89**	0.23**
- Cohort J (1929-1933)	1.09**	-0.33	-0.62**	0.23**
- Cohort K (1934-1938)	1.11**	-1.25**	-0.80**	0.08
- Cohort L (1939-1943)	1.21**	-0.89*	-0.49*	0.06
- Cohort M (1944-1948)	0.71**	-0.92**	-0.16	0.00
- Cohort N (1949-1953)	0.42*	-0.53~	-0.14	0.04
- Cohort O (1954-1958)	0.39**	-0.26	-0.02	-0.09~
- Cohort P (1959-1963) (reference)	0	0	0	0
- Cohort Q (1964-1968)	-0.30*	-0.23	0.16	-0.11*
- Cohort R (1969-1973)	-0.48**	-0.06	0.14	-0.03
- Cohort S (1974-1978)	-0.71**	0.06	0.42*	-0.10
- Cohort T (1979-1983)	-0.88**	-0.70~	-0.94**	-0.22**
- Cohort U (1984-1988)	-0.49	-0.03	-1.92**	-0.18
R^2	.027	.066	.088	.047

*~ p< .10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

Figure 3.3
Differences in Social Participation between Cohorts H to R (Deviations from Cohort P; Hours/ Week)



As can be seen, cohort differences in formal participation show an approximately linear pattern. The second column of Table 3.3 lists the results of the analysis in regard to informal social life within the home. Contrary to formal participation, there is an important and significant period effect. The amount of time spent on these types of activities has been decreasing strongly with every year of measurement. The effect size of the period coefficients increases when controlling for life-cycle and cohort differences: the gross decline (shown in the previous section) was 2 hours and 49 minutes between 1980 and 2000; the net period effect was 3 hours and 17 minutes. Visiting others, receiving visitors and talking to inmates have become less popular in all life-cycle stages and among all cohorts. However, life-cycle difference remain an important source of participation inequality, though. Children in the household spend the least amount of time on these types of activities by far. When they move out to start their own household, there is a sudden, large boost of social activity within the home. The other groups without children (the last two life-cycle stages) clearly stand out in a positive way as well. Possibly, part of their informal social participation consists of visiting their children and receiving their children as visitors. Differences are fairly large: retired respondents without children in their household spend almost 4 hours more of their weekly time budget on informal social

contacts within the home than respondents in the earliest life-cycle stage. The differences between cohorts are not clear-cut. Moreover, the addition of cohorts to the model is not a real improvement (0.3 per cent explained variance). This is confirmed in Figure 3.3, where the differences reflect a fluctuating pattern. Among cohorts K to M (born between 1934 and 1948) there seem to be relatively low levels of informal participation within the home.

The results for informal social life outside the home are listed in the third column of Table 3.3. There is virtually no period effect (the 0.2 per cent increment in explained variance is significant but obviously not substantial). Adding life-cycle means a relatively large improvement in the model (increase in explained variance of 7.9 per cent) due to the difference between the two earliest life-cycle stages and the rest. When people start having children, their informal participation outside the home drops by approximately 2 hours weekly, and there is little recovery in the later stages of the life course. Cohort differences in informal participation outside the home are substantial as well, with differences of over an hour between older and younger groups. As Figure 3.3 shows, the scores seem to go up in a straight line. Every subsequent cohort is a bit more involved in going to bars, parties, events and so on.

The results of the analysis of time spent on distant social contacts are given in the final column of Table 3.3. This is the only type of participation that shows a positive period effect, which maintains its significance after entering the other variables in the model. The differences are relatively modest, although it should be noted that these are variations around a relatively low average (0.76 hours a week). The inclusion of life-cycle effects adds another 3.2 per cent explained variance to the model. As it turns out, having children in the household is important. On the whole, groups without children spend most time on distant social contacts. Adding cohorts to the model is not a particularly important improvement; few of the differences are significant. Some of the older cohorts show relatively high levels of maintenance of distant social contacts (which can also be seen in Figure 3.3).

3.6 Results: Explaining Trends

Summarizing the findings from the previous section, and focusing on changes over time (either period or cohort), there are four main results:

- *a cohort effect on formal participation (decrease),*
- *a period effect on informal participation within the home (decrease),*
- *a cohort effect on informal participation outside the home (increase), and*
- *a period effect on distant informal participation (increase).*

Five different explanations, already discussed in the section on previous research, are tested in the analyses (Table 3.4). To understand what the values mean, it is

necessary to refer back to Figure 3.1. The indirect effects listed are the paths in Figure 3.1 that go through the intermediating variables (consisting of a j* b j). The degree to which these factors are an explanation can be found by comparing the size of the total effect (c) – which is the effect without any intermediations – with the various indirect effects (separate or summed). The direct effect (c') is the remainder of the total effect minus all indirect effects.

The first column in Table 3.4 lists cohort differences in formal participation. Some of these differences can be explained through religiosity, as is shown by its significant indirect effect (-0.040). As it turns out, every younger cohort is less religious and there is a positive correlation between religion and formal participation, which causes a reduction of the total effect of approximately 31 per cent (-0.040 / -0.128). The other factors do not offer any explanation (do not mediate). In fact, three of them – television, mobility and education – suppress the total effect of cohorts on formal participation. The positive, indirect effect of education was as expected, but does not compensate for the effect of decreasing levels of religiosity. The positive, indirect effects of watching television and mobility are remarkable, but too small to be of any real importance. Overall, the cohort decrease was 17 per cent.

Table 3.4
Estimations of Mediation by Five Explanatory Variables

	Cohort decrease formal participation	Period decrease informal participation within the home	Cohort increase informal participation outside the home	Period increase social contacts at a distance
Religion	-0.040*	0.000	0.015*	0.000
Work	0.000	-0.105*	0.000	-0.020*
TV	0.008*	-0.089*	0.011*	-0.009*
Mobility	0.003*	-0.001	0.006	0.001
Education	0.007*	-0.052*	-0.000	0.032*
Total indirect	-0.022*	-0.247*	0.032*	0.004*
Direct effect (c')	-0.106	-0.646	0.130	0.083
Total effect (c)	-0.128	-0.893	0.162	0.086
Explained by indirect effects	17%	28%	20%	5%

** The indirect effect (a*b) is deviates significantly from zero (judging from 99% bootstrap confidence interval)*

The decrease in informal social life within the home is related to three different factors. Spending time on work and watching television reduce the total effect significantly; the indirect effects (of -0.105 and -0.089) explain 12 per cent and 10 per cent of the period effect. The more time people spend working and watching television (both increased between 1975 and 2000), the less time they spend on informal participation within the home. The indirect effect of education is less (i.e. 6 per cent of the total effect), but also interesting. The average educational level has

become higher and the higher educated spend less time on informal participation within the home, which resulted in the negative, indirect effect. In sum, around 28 per cent of the decrease in informal social participation within the home (between 1980 and 2000) can be explained by the fact that the educational level and the time spent on watching television and working have been increasing.

The third column in Table 3.4 indicates the rise in informal social life outside the home among younger cohorts. Part of the explanation can be ascribed to significant and positive indirect effects of religion and watching television (0.015 and 0.011, respectively). Younger cohorts are less religious and watch less television. In turn, this is related to more informal participation outside the home. Together, the factors are responsible for about 20 per cent of the total effect. Work, mobility and education do not show significant influences.

The model for the period effect on social contacts at a distance in column 4 is a case of opposed mediating and suppressing effects (which explains the low final share of the total effect of 5 percent). The indirect effect of education (0.032) is the only factor that helps to explain the increase in time spent on distant social contacts. In fact, it explains a fair share of the total effect (the reduction equals 0.032 / 0.086 or 37 per cent). The higher educated tend to spend more time maintaining social contacts at a distance (and the educational level has been rising). The small difference between the total and direct effect is due to the influence of work and television. There has been an increase in time spent working and watching television, in turn reducing the time spent on maintaining distant social contacts.

3.7 Discussion

Before drawing conclusions on the current findings, a few comments on methodology and on findings in related research are perhaps appropriate.

The data used in this research comprised new samples for every year of measurement. The cohorts "followed over time" are in reality different respondents, and the quality of our analyses is dependent on the extent to which these cohort samples are representative. Furthermore, owing to the multi-wave, cross-sectional data, possibilities for drawing causal inferences are limited. The proper sequence of the variables cannot be determined; it can be concluded that watching television is related to less informal social participation within the home, but not that the latter is caused by the former. Moreover, the correlation between certain trends in time may be spurious. The decrease in religiosity has gone hand-in-hand with an increase in informal participation outside the home, but this could be due to a third factor that has not been measured.

A second methodological issue is that the controls in the APC analyses for life-cycle differences were better in the case of the middle-aged cohorts than in the cohorts at the ends of the continuum (both young and old), as they went through

more stages in the life course. This problem was partly dealt with by excluding some cohorts (A through G and S, T, U) from the explanatory analyses. Obviously, when new data become available, this will improve the quality of the controls.

On the whole, simultaneous assessment of cohort, period and life-cycle influences was worthwhile. Throughout this study, most net trends follow the same pattern as their gross counterparts, but the size of the differences can be different. One remarkable exception was the cohort effect on informal social life within the home. The observed numbers showed that the latter decreases over the cohorts. However, according to the APC analysis, the cohorts do not show a downward trend at all. The "true" cohort trend may even be upward. In other words, what looked like a cohort effect was actually a composition of a period and life-cycle effect. Concerning content, the distinction between period, life-cycle and cohorts is a first step in coming up with explanations, and, moreover, it offers clues about what to expect by way of future developments.

Another topic for discussion is the validity of the findings compared to those of related research. First of all, a decrease in formal participation was found among cohorts (but no general or period decline was found). This is roughly in line with findings by previous Dutch research (De Hart & Dekker, 1999), and also with analyses by Andersen et al. (2006).[3] In contrast to the general decline in civic engagement found by Putnam (2000) in the US, no such decline has been taking place in the Netherlands over the past few decades. However, the fact that younger cohorts show considerably lower levels of formal participation (which cannot be ascribed to life-cycle differences) implies that there is a risk of a decline in future. This was also found by Knulst and Van Eijck (2006) in comparable research concluding that younger cohorts show less inclination to volunteer.

The most dramatic time budget change that was found with regard to social participation was a general decline in informal participation within the home (by over 3 hours). Remarkably, this does not correspond to findings by Scheepers and Janssen (2001), who found that visits to friends, family and neighbours were stable between 1975 and 1996 in the Netherlands. However, it should be noted that Scheepers and Janssen used a different type of indicator: general survey questions with a few answering categories. It could be that respondents still report seeing their family and friends often (in survey questions), while in fact the amount of time spent on these contacts decreases. The time use survey is a more accurate instrument in this sense. In Sweden, an increase in informal social relations was found after World War II (Rothstein, 2001), but this was again based on other, more general indicators. In the United States, Putnam (2000) found a decline in visiting in the previous past decades (also based on time use surveys). Although not directly related, a recent publication by McPherson et al. (2006) is also worth mentioning. They found that the size of "core discussion networks" in the United States decreased considerably

[3] Who also used data of the DTUS, until 1995.

between 1985 and 2004. These networks mainly consist of nearby social contacts, and informal social participation within the home is an important way of maintaining these contacts. In other words, there is a theoretical connection between the two; social contacts need investment if they are to be maintained (Lin, 1999) and paying visits and receiving visitors is a way to do this. Based on the current research, we can only speculate on this relationship, but it could be an important topic for future research.

Research related to informal participation outside the home is fairly scarce. Oldenburg (1989) concluded that people have been turning away from "cafés, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons, and other hangouts" in favour of spending time at home, but his analyses were based on the situation in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, where suburbanization played an important role. Based on the analyses of this article, it can be concluded that the picture for the Netherlands in the 1980s and 1990s is different. Moreover, it is unlikely they will be taking place in the future, as younger cohorts are showing increasing levels of this type of social participation. A possible increase in informal social participation outside the home (in Sweden) was also mentioned by Rothstein (2001), who observed an increase in restaurant visits.

Finally, it was concluded in previous sections of this article that the time spent on distant social contacts has been increasing. Other research on trends in letter-writing or making telephone calls is hard to find. Research did show that maintaining social contacts through the Internet has been expanding rapidly (Wellman, 2001) and that this has not come at the expense of other types of social contact (Katz, Rice, & Aspden, 2001; Wellman, et al., 2001). Unfortunately, the data set used in this article did not contain the appropriate indicators for it to be possible to include social contacts through the Internet. Most obviously, this would have strengthened our conclusions that the time people spend on distant social contacts is increasing.

3.8 Conclusions

This article started with questions about what happened to social participation in the Netherlands between 1975 and 2000 and how possible changes can be explained. As it turned out, social participation is changing in several ways, and disentangling life-cycle, period and cohort effects can be helpful in understanding those changes.

Having schoolchildren turned out to be the most important life-cycle influence on formal participation (positive effect). With regard to informal participation, the different life-cycle stages have distinct patterns too. Paying and receiving visits is mainly the domain of the ones who have started their own households but do not have children yet and of the ones in the later stages of their life-cycle. Going out to create and maintain social contacts is notably the domain of the ones in the earliest

stages in the life-cycle. This type of participation drops dramatically when people start having children of their own and does not recover in later life. From a life-cycle perspective, there seems to be substitution of informal participation within the home by participation outside the home for children, and the opposite seems to be happening among older people without children in the household.

One major change was found in relation to period effects. Informal participation within the home dropped by about 3 hours between 1980 and 2000 (a reduction of around one-third). According to the analyses, part of this change can be explained by an increase in working hours, bringing to mind ideas such as those described by Wellman and Haythornthwaite (2002) about a turn away from "door-to-door communities" towards "networked individualism", where people no longer drop by each others' home as primary means of social contact, but instead use either their mobile telephone or the Internet. This also corresponds to the other general change that was found, namely the rise of distant social contacts. Although this trend was modest in absolute numbers, adding new communication technologies would certainly make it more substantive in the future. However, in a world where "networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies" (Castells, 2000, p. 500), and where people work, sleep, take part in sport and socialize in different places, one would also expect rising levels of mobility to be related to changes in social participation. This was not the case in our analyses. The extent of people's mobility showed hardly any connection with social participation. The causes of these changes have to be more complex than a shift towards a networked society. The role of education is interesting, contributing as it does to a turning away from social participation within the home and to higher levels of distant social contacts. It is possible that the higher educated have larger and/or more distant social networks. Rather than visiting these contacts (which would cause higher levels of mobility), they choose to maintain their contacts by telephone or mail.

Some of the changes that were found did not manifest themselves as general changes, but as differences between cohorts. These were, notably, a turn away from formal participation and an increase in informal participation outside the home by younger cohorts. Civic engagement, in the sense of performing volunteer work and being active in voluntary associations, is most popular among the cohorts born roughly between the two World Wars. For every cohort after World War II, the share of the weekly time budget spent on formal participation is smaller. As it turned out, religion is important in explaining trends in both types of social participation. Decreasing levels of religiosity cause a decrease in formal participation (which is a well-known relation), but, more surprisingly, also more socializing outside the home (religiosity is negatively correlated to it) for younger cohorts.

Although this sheds some light on what has been happening to social participation in the Netherlands and why, there are many questions that remain unanswered. Thinking about future research, there are two main lines in extending this approach. First, research in other countries will have to reveal the extent to

which these trends occur in other European or Western societies. Second, it is important to study the outcomes connected to the participation types. Involvement in voluntary associations most likely serves purposes different from going to bars and restaurants, and receiving friends at home is a different investment in relationships from calling friends by telephone. However, before we can draw conclusions we have to gain systematic insight into what individual and societal level outcomes are connected to what type of social participation. It is crucial to know what we gain or lose with the rise and fall of different modes of sociability.

4. Dissolution of Associational Life? Testing the Individualization and Informalization Hypotheses on Leisure Activities in the Netherlands between 1975 and 2005[1]

Abstract

We examine whether individualization and informalization processes occurred in the field of leisure in the Netherlands, by analyzing the (social) context of a broad range of leisure activities between 1975 and 2005. We find that the choice for a leisure context is dependent on education, gender, year of birth, age, and time pressure. We find evidence for informalization, but – contrary to popular beliefs – not for individualization. The informalization trend follows a pattern of cohort replacement, and is also caused by a rise in the average educational level in the population. Our findings imply that research on civil society, community and social capital should not only be concerned with membership rates, but also with participation in alternative social contexts.

[1] This chapter is currently under review. Paul Dekker is co-author.

4.1 Introduction

In sociology and political science, there has been a long-lasting concern about the extent of people's involvement in communities, their contributions to voluntary organizations, their interest and activity in politics, and other kinds of pro-social behavior. These worries can be summarized as the "decline-of-community thesis" (Paxton, 1999, p. 88). However, despite the fact that the concern is very persistent, empirical evidence seems to be ambiguous at best (Fischer, 2005; Rotolo, 1999). A popular indicator to study these changes is membership in voluntary associations, which is a convenient but limited measure (Stolle & Rochon, 1998). Therefore, some authors have suggested a more broader perspective, in which other, informal alternatives are also taken into account (Schudson, 2006; Stolle, et al., 2005). In this paper, we contribute to this wider perspective, by studying associational membership next to other contexts in the field of leisure. Based on information about people's leisure activities between 1975 and 2005 in the Netherlands, we want to know whether informal and individual activities have become more important (at the expense of associational activities). We refer to these processes as *informalization* and *individualization*.

Voluntary associations are often seen as a crucial part of a healthy community and an important aspect of citizens' involvement in democracy (e.g., Putnam, 2000). Although voluntary associations may have special functions, the emphasis on associational involvement as the key indicator of social capital also results from practical considerations: it is relatively easy measurable and available in a large number of surveys. Informal groups, on the other hand, "are so all-pervasive, loose-knit, changeable, amorphous, and numerous that it is difficult to study them" (Newton, 1999, p. 11). Taken together, "... associational memberships have become the indicator of choice for examining the rate of formation or destruction of social capital" (Stolle & Rochon, 1998, p. 48).

We argue that examining voluntary association participation alone is insufficient and can lead to biased conclusions about decline-of-community. Suppose we witness a decline in sports club participation over the years. Could we then conclude that a process of individualization is taking place? It depends on the kind of substitutions that are occurring. People may have changed club life for practicing sports alone in their homes. That means an exchange of associational for individual activities, which is our interpretation of individualization. However, other things may have happened. People may have changed sports activities for non-sports activities. Would that be individualization? We argue it is not, since people are not turning away from voluntary associations, they are turning away from sports. Moreover, people may have exchanged the context of a club or association for an informal group, drawn from their social networks. This is informalization rather then individualization, and does not necessarily mean decline-of-community. A thorough

test of the decline-of-community thesis needs to include (trends in) alternative contexts next to associational involvement.

Next to the trends in the social context of leisure activities we will analyze who chooses certain social contexts. Recently, it has been suggested that several aspects of modernization have driven changes in civic participation (Dekker, 2004; Fuchs & Klingemann, 1995). As individual autonomy grew and work and family life became more demanding, citizens have started to look for more flexible and on-demand alternatives (cf. Van Deth, 2000). In line with these ideas, we will analyze different cultural and structural factors and the way they affect the share of associational, individual, and informal group activities in people's leisure time. Finally, we will try to explain the trends by looking at changes in population characteristics.

4.2 Decreasing Memberships, Individualization, Informalization

The decline-of-community thesis has seen a strong increase in popularity as a result of the publications by Putnam (1995a, 1995b, 2000), who concluded that civic engagement has been declining in the United States since – roughly – the Second World War. Important indicators of this trend are participation in political, religious, and leisure associations. Although many scholars have been inspired by the work of Putnam, his claims are still subject of animated scientific debate.

Paxton (1999) concludes that participation in both formal and informal types of association have been stable in the US in the past decades. Fischer (2005) comes to similar conclusions. On the other hand, Skocpol (2003) concludes from a historical analysis that several aspects of "classic civic America" have disappeared (although at the same time she warns us that many of the nostalgic pictures of civic engagement of the past are misconceived), and Andersen, Curtis, and Grabb (2006) showed that Americans, since 1975, have spent a shrinking share of their time budget in civic associations.

Critics have also suggested a shift from formal membership in voluntary associations to more unorganized individual and informal activities with similar content or similar civic impact (Schudson, 1998, 2006). Shifts in political participation are an example:

Participation in informal local groups, political consumerism, involvement in transnational advocacy networks, the regular signing and forwarding of email petitions, and the spontaneous organizations of protests and rallies are just a few examples of the growing importance of informal organization, individualized action, and network mobilization. (Stolle, et al., 2005, p. 250)

This shift has also been witnessed in another aspect of associational involvement: volunteering. Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) suggest the rise of new styles of volunteering; a "reflexive style" – driven by individual preferences and

shaped through occasional involvement in diverging settings – is emerging next to the old model of "collective style" volunteering. On the whole, "present-day volunteer efforts appear to occur on a more sporadic, temporary, and non-committal basis" (p. 168).

In general, there is less empirical work on informalization than on individualization. The fact that informal association is harder to define and measure may partly explain this. Informal groups are "loose and amorphous networks of individuals who come together on a casual basis and at irregular times to play darts, talk about football, discuss a novel, raise consciousness, offer mutual support, or play a scratch game of football in the park" (Newton, 1999, p. 11). They lack fixed rules of membership or governance (Kwak, et al., 2004), causing "[...] only the weakest of obligations" (Wuthnow, 1994). They are "defined *by* the ties between individuals", whereas formal associations "survive beyond any particular member" (Paxton, 1999, p. 100).

The rise of the small-group movement in the United States (Wuthnow, 1994) is an example of informalization. According to the author, it is a "quiet revolution", and a response to dissatisfaction with the "general breakdown of traditional support structures" (p. 5). Self-help groups are among the most important examples of these small groups. The rise of small groups is part of a broader development, in which people increasingly prefer 'loose connections' over more long-lasting and demanding forms of social participation (Wuthnow, 1998).

Individualization and informalization processes have also been witnessed in the field of leisure. Putnam (2000) suggested that informal groups are taking over the role of clubs with regard to bowling. In fact, this is the way in which the title of his well-known book should be explained:

Strictly speaking, only poetic license authorizes my description of non-league bowling as 'bowling alone.' Any observant visitor to her local bowling alley can confirm that informal groups outnumber solo bowlers ... On the other hand, league bowling, by requiring regular participation with a diverse set of acquaintances, did represent a form of sustained social capital that is not matched by an occasional pickup of the game. (Putnam, 2000, p. 113)

O'Conner (2007) comes to similar conclusions in the case of cycling; he observes an increase in "[...] informal, unorganized bunch rides" (O'Conner, 2007, p. 86). Halpern (2005) concluded more generally that involvement in sports and exercising have gone up, but that team sports have gone down, and that similar processes occur in the field of music.

Given the abovementioned ideas in the literature, we expect to find indications of (a) individualization and (b) informalization in the field of leisure. Or in other words, we expect that – between 1975 and 2005 – the share of individual and informal group activities has increased compared to the share of activities in voluntary associations.

4.3 Explaining the Choice for a Context

The next step is to understand who is more inclined to choose associational, informal group, and individual activities. We propose an explanation along two lines, and argue that both cultural factors and structural factors contribute to differences in the choices of social contexts. Since some of these factors changed during the period under study, this may have resulted in changed needs and opportunities, which in turn may explain the trends.

The cultural aspects of the explanation stem from ideas about modernization by Beck (e.g., Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) and Inglehart (e.g., 1997), among others. Their use of the term individualization is more encompassing than ours, indicating a growing importance of individual autonomy and responsibility, more emphasis on expressive values, detraditionalization, and decreasing loyalty to institutions (Bauman, 2002; Inglehart & Baker, 2000). As a result of these processes, people may take the fixed structures of voluntary associations, with activities on set days and hours, no longer for granted, and demand action when they need it. Hustinx (2005) concludes that, the more "individual, short-lived, noncommittal, and highly results-oriented volunteer involvement" is the result of "broader modernization and individualization processes" (p. 624).

These cultural shifts supposedly manifest themselves as "intergenerational value change" (Inglehart & Baker, 2000, p. 42). According to this argument, the more individualistic values – with emphasis on freedom of choice, and self-development – are first adopted by the younger generations. In their formative periods (roughly until their 25th birthday), generations are more likely to adjust to changes in and influences from their environments. Thereafter, values are claimed to be largely fixed. For the current paper this implies that if associational changes are driven by shifts towards more modern values, younger cohorts should display different preferences for social settings than older ones, and be less inclined to participate in the formal settings of voluntary associations.

Another aspect of cultural change is the declining influence of churches on people's everyday lives, for example indicated by lower levels of conventional religious participation (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). This is particularly important in the Netherlands, where secularization forces have been strong (De Hart, 2001), and where the decline in religious participation is one of the most important aspects of detraditionalization (De Beer, 2007). It is likely that the importance of associational membership has also diminished along with this process, as associations were connected to the religious denominations for the most part of the 20th century. A process known as "pillarization" divided many aspects of society vertically; many societal institutions (among which voluntary associations) came in separate Catholic, Protest, social democratic, and liberal instances. People who are strongly integrated in religious communities will therefore feel more obliged to participate in voluntary associations than those who are not.

In summary, we expect that the choice for leisure contexts is partly the result of cultural changes, indicated by differences resulting from cohort membership (younger cohorts will more often choose informal and individual activities), integration in church (those who often attend church show more associational activities), and adherence to values of self-development (positively related to the informal and individual context).

Apart from these cultural factors there may be several structural factors that influence the choice of social settings for leisure activities. There are gender differences in the composition of social networks, for instance. According to Lin (2000), women's networks are smaller, show larger proportions of kin and neighbors, and smaller proportions of friends and co-workers. The traditional role of women in the household and community also resulted in different social participation: they generally show more involvement in individual and informal activities than in voluntary associations and organizations (Paxton, et al., 2007; Stolle, et al., 2005; Wollebaek & Selle, 2005). However, these things have been changing, obviously. Women's increased labor market participation has reduced the average activity in the household and community. But it is unclear how this affects the choice of social contexts; counterbalancing the decrease in activity in households and communities may be the increase in time pressure and fragmentation. As a result of combining work and family life, and having higher expectations and standards in both domains, people increasingly face time pressure (Van der Lippe, 2007). Therefore, working women may even be more inclined to opt for flexible social contexts than non-working women.

Other factors also contribute to time pressure and fragmentation, which in turn ask for flexible social settings. Some scholars claim that people's working-, family-, and social lives no longer take place within one place or community, but are increasingly scattered over different places (Castells, 2000; Wellman, 2001). This trend, for example indicated by increased mobility, would lead in turn to changes in social participation (Glanville, 2004; Putnam, 2000; Ryan, et al., 2005). The process in which time pressure causes problems in the coordination of (social) activities is also referred to as *de-routinization* (Southerton & Tomlinson, 2005).

Finally, education is known to affect social participation. The highly educated have larger social networks and better social skills than the lower educated (Lin, 2001), which enhances their opportunities of organizing their activities in their own company. This is in line with a historical observation by Skocpol (2003), who noticed that from the late 1960s onward, the higher educated in the US "were the ones who withdrew from or refused to join traditionally important fraternal and veterans' groups" (p. 186). The more pro-social orientation by the highly educated implies that they perform less individual (leisure) activities.

In summary, we expect that the choice for leisure contexts is partly the result of structural differences, such as those between men and women (the latter are more inclined to choose individual activities), those resulting from the combination of

work and household tasks (more informal or individual activities), those resulting from time pressure and fragmentation (also more informal and individual activities), and those resulting from educational attainment (the higher educated show less individual activities).

The factors mentioned in this section can also be responsible for trends of individualization and/ or informalization when their distributions in the population change. For instance, educational expansion or secularization change the average educational level and religiosity in the population, and given the fact that the highly educated and the religious have distinct patterns of participation, this may drive trends on the aggregate level. We will explore these possibilities in our final analysis.

4.4 The Case of the Netherlands

Participation levels in the Netherlands are among the highest in the world, both regarding involvement in voluntary associations (Curtis, et al., 2001), and involvement in informal networks (Pichler & Wallace, 2007). The available data on trends in voluntary association participation shows that the evidence for a general decline is weak. Over the past 25 years, percentages of membership and active involvement have been stable, except for a few very specific associations (De Hart, 2005; De Hart & Dekker, 1999). On the other hand, there are indications that younger cohorts spend less time in voluntary associations (Van Ingen, 2008).

Another reason why the Netherlands is an interesting case, is the fact that it is among the countries that are "close to the cutting edge of cultural change" (Inglehart & Baker, 2000, p. 31). As a result of this high level of modernization, one would expect individualization and informalization trends in associational life to be most manifest in these countries. In the field of politics, this was confirmed by Dekker & Hooghe (2003), who concluded that a shift has been taking place from formal political participation to less hierarchical organized forms of participation in political and societal life.

4.5 Data and Techniques

The Dutch Time Use Survey (DTUS) is used for the analyses in this paper (Breedveld, 2000). This dataset is unique in both the large time span it covers and the level of detail in which leisure activities and their social settings are registered. Between 1975 and 2005, it has been conducted seven times, and for each wave a new sample was drawn representative for the Dutch population of 12 years and older. For the current purpose, the seven waves of measurement were pooled into one dataset, which adds up to a sample size of 17,704 respondents. The survey

consists of a questionnaire and a diary part; most information used in the current paper stems from the former. As a result of the high level of involvement that is required, response rates tend to be somewhat lower than in other surveys in the Netherlands. Nonetheless, there is no evidence that the response is different from other surveys, or that bias occurs according to people's busyness (Van Ingen, et al., 2009).

Dependent variables

In the DTUS, respondents were asked whether they performed certain leisure activities. Although it is impossible to be exhaustive, we believe that most of people's leisure activities were captured by this list of approximately 50 different pastimes. They were subdivided in three fields: sports, artistic & cultural activities, and hobbies. The latter contained most items, with activities such as gardening, collecting stamps, solving puzzles, reading, breeding pets, sewing, and many more. Throughout the years, there was large extent of uniformity in the items, although items with little response were sometimes compiled into fewer items. There were various items capturing remainder categories of "other activities" in all the waves.

Second, respondents were asked to register in what kind of setting the activities took place. For every item, the answering possibilities were: (1) no (did not perform activity); (2) yes, in a club/ voluntary association; (3) yes, in another kind of group; (4) yes, performed it alone. Respondents were allowed to pick multiple options, but this was rarely done. In the analyses, we mostly used the (overall) counts of options two to four.

These data gave us a very detailed overview of trends in leisure activities and their contexts. However, one may still wonder what the exact meaning of the abovementioned "other kind of group" is. Our initial interpretation was that this category should capture the informal groups of friends, family and acquaintances that make up the regular company during leisure activities in everyday life, but in the DTUS dataset, we did not have the possibility to check this assumption. Therefore, we consulted another source that is representative for the Dutch population: the Facilities Use Survey (FUS) of 2003 (Social and Cultural Planning Office, 2003). This survey contained a question about sports, with a similar distinction between voluntary associations and other kinds of contexts, but with more detailed information about their composition. 83% of these groups consisted of friends, family, or a combination of both, sometimes combined with individual activities (9%). Other options were: work/ company setting (3%) or student facilities (1%). The remainder (4%) consisted of several rare combinations of multiple contexts.

Independent variables

The variable *year* indicated the year of measurement, which ranges from 0 (1975) to 6 (2005). In other words, every unit reflects a five year change. *Women* and

employed are straightforward dummy variables. *Education* was measured on a 7-point ordinal scale, ranging from primary education to university degree, and representing the main educational categories in the Netherlands. *Cohorts* are operationalized in five categories representing years of birth: until 1930, 1931-1945, 1946-1960, 1961-1975, and from 1976. *Age* is a continuous variable, ranging from 12 to 100 years. It is used as a control variable, as a way to remove the variation that results from aging from the cohort effects. Age-squared was added to capture a possible non-linear relationship. *Church attendance* was measured on an 8-point scale, asking about the number of church visits per year. *Combining tasks* indicates whether someone combines a job (≥ 12 hours/ week) with household tasks (≥ 12 hours/ week). *Time problems* consists of a scale (Cronbach's Alpha = .75) made up of three items: (1) "In my free time I often don't have the time to do the things I actually want", (2) "It costs a lot of trouble to plan my leisure activities", and (3) "To many of my leisure activities are dispersed". The *values* items were measured on a 5-point scale ranging from very unimportant to very important.

The descriptive statistics of the dependent variables, as shown in Table 4.1, can be interpreted as follows: on average, people registered 0.49 leisure activities in voluntary associations, 0.44 leisure activities in informal groups, and 5.03 individual leisure activities. The proportion leisure activities performed in the context of a voluntary association was 0.09 on average. Similarly, the proportion of activities in informal groups was 0.07 and the proportion individual activities was 0.85. The time problems and values variables were available in a limited number of waves, and thus show a much smaller sample size (N).

Analytical Strategy

First, we analyze the trends in the social context of leisure activities using a linear regression model (OLS estimated), with the absolute number of activities as dependent variable (Table 4.2).

Second, we examine the proportions of associational, informal and individual activities. That is, the share of a certain context in relation to the sum of all leisure activities (e.g., for informal activities: $\Sigma_{informal}/ (\Sigma_{associational} + \Sigma_{informal} + \Sigma_{individual})$). By using proportions, selection problems are circumvented; some people may register more activities in all contexts, while our interest is in the importance of a certain context given the leisure activities that are performed. Trends and correlates with regard to these proportions are examined (Table 4.3).

Finally, we analyze whether changes in the values of the correlates in the population explain the trends (Table 4.4). We regress the proportion of informal activities on the year of measurement, and examine in subsequent models whether the size of this coefficient is reduced (intermediation) after entering explanatory variables.

Table 4.1
Descriptive statistics of most important variables

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Leisure: voluntary associations	17,704	0.49	0.78	0	13
Leisure: informal groups	17,704	0.44	1.01	0	16
Leisure: individual activities	17,704	5.03	2.60	0	19
Proportion associational	17,546	0.09	0.15	0	1
Proportion informal	17,546	0.07	0.14	0	1
Proportion individual	17,546	0.85	0.20	0	1
Year (of measurement; 1975 = 0)	17,704	3.05	1.78	0	6
Women	17,704	0.57	0.50	0	1
Employed	17,676	0.47	0.50	0	1
Education	17,583	3.26	1.44	1	6
Cohorts	17,704	2.91	1.16	1	5
Age	17,704	39.24	17.00	12	100
Church attendance	17,704	2.26	2.89	0	8
Combining taks	17,704	0.28	0.45	0	1
Time problems	7,137	2.68	0.99	1	5
Values: relaxing & hobbies important	1,394	4.76	0.62	1	5
Values: social contacts important	1,455	4.55	0.64	1	5
Values: self-development important	1,461	4.07	0.85	1	5

4.6 Results

The interpretation of the results in Table 4.2 is fairly straightforward. Each row and column represents a separate regression, i.e. the results of twelve regression analyses are shown. The variable year indicates year of measurement, ranging from 0 (1975) to 6 (2005). As a result, the intercepts have a useful interpretation, they represent the average number of activities (in a certain context) in the year 1975 (when year equals zero). Thus, the first intercept can be interpreted as: in 1975, people performed 0.484 leisure activities in voluntary associations on average. The results in the first column are the summed activities over all three domains. The trend in associational leisure activities was very small: every five years 0.003 additional activities in voluntary associations were undertaken in the sample (or a 3% increase between 1975 and 2005), which is not significantly different from zero. For informal group activities, the situation is different. People performed 0.340 leisure activities in informal groups in 1975 and every year of measurement (when predicted linearly) this increased by 0.032. This means that in 2005 (year = 6), the average number had risen to 0.534 (0.340+6*0.032 approximately (difference occurs as a result of rounding off the numbers)), which equals a 57% increase. The third row shows that, in general, most leisure activities are performed individually. In 1975, people performed 4.950 individual leisure activities, and there was a significant increase (b = 0.026; p = .020) over the years: between 1975 and 2005 the number of activities increased by 0.153 (6*0.026). This increase is very small, however; it corresponds to a 3% change (in 30 years).

Next, we subdivided our dependent variables. Trends turned out to be different according to the type of leisure activities under study. Most marked are the developments in sports. As can be seen in Table 4.2, the number of sports activities increased in all three contexts. However, the magnitude of the changes has been rather different. This can be shown by computing the relative change over the years. Between 1975 and 2005, the average number of sports activities in voluntary associations increased from 0.345 to 0.383. The other two trends are more pronounced: there was an increase in sports activities in informal groups, which went up from 0.100 to 0.280, and there was a large increase in individual sports activities, from 0.160 in 1975 to 0.634 in 2005. All three trends are significantly different from zero.

Table 4.2
Regression of leisure participation (frequency) on year of measurement (entries are unstandardized coefficients)

	Leisure	Sports	Arts & Culture	Hobbies
Voluntary associations				
year	0.003	0.006*	0.000	-0.004**
intercept	0.484	0.345	0.051	0.088
Informal groups				
year	0.032**	0.030**	0.002	0.000
intercept	0.340	0.100	0.063	0.177
Individual activities				
year	0.026**	0.079**	-0.011**	-0.042**
intercept	4.950	0.160	0.806	3.984

*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

The trends in artistic & cultural leisure activities are different. As Table 4.2 shows, there was no significant trend for associational and informal group activities, whereas the number of individual activities decreased (b = -0.011). However, this trend is not strong; between 1975 and 2005, it equals -0.067 (6*-0.011), or an 8% decrease. Finally, the last column in Table 4.2 displays the results for hobbies. These leisure activities are typically performed individually, the intercept of individual activities (b = 3.984) is far greater than those of associational and informal group activities (b = 0.088 and b = 0.177). There was a decrease in activities in voluntary associations of 0.025 (6*-0.004), or 28%. Simultaneously, a very small decrease in the number of individual activities occurred (of approximately 6% (6*-0.042/3.984)).

These numbers are interesting as such, but – as we have argued in the introduction of this paper – our conceptualizations of individualization and informalization concern shares of activities, or relative numbers. Although the information about the share of individual or informal group activities can be

calculated from Table 4.2, it is more convenient to calculate proportions (as explained in the data section). In Table 4.3 the analyses of these proportions are shown.

First, we analyzed the trends in the proportions of associational, informal group and individual activities for the entire field of leisure (models I, III, and V). Contrary to our expectations, we found a decrease of the share of individual activities (b = -.005), which went hand in hand with an increase in the share of informal activities. The proportion associational activities did not change. In other words, our first conclusion is that between 1975 and 2005, we see signs of informalization, but not of individualization. Note that one proportion is always the inverse of the other two; two regression models can provide all the information. However, we show all three for the sake of easier interpretation.

Next, we explored factors that may explain the choice for a context in leisure activities. No clear cohort patterns emerged regarding the proportions associational and individual activities (which contradicts our expectations), but cohorts clearly differed in their choice for informal group activities: the share of leisure activities in informal groups is larger for every younger cohort. Age and age-squared were included as control variables (to remove aging from the cohort effect). There was not much life course variation in the proportion informal activities, but an age effect occurred with regard to the proportions of associational and individual activities: the former decreased until age 55-60 and then remained more or less stable, whereas the latter followed the opposite pattern. This may be due to the fact that people in their 30s and 40s are in the busiest phase of their lives, which constrains their choices, making individual activities a more convenient choice than associational activities.

The frequency of church visits had a positive effect on the proportion of informal activities and no effect on individual activities or associational activities. Although voluntary associations had a strong connection to the religious denominations in the Netherlands in the past decades, church attendance does not lower the shares of informal and individual activities. The positive effect on the proportion informal activities was small, given the standard deviation of church attendance (SD = 2.89; see Table 4.1).

In the next rows of Table 4.3 are three structural factors which we expected to affect the choice for certain contexts: gender (women), employment, and the combination of tasks. Whether people were employed or not did not bring about different choices in the context of leisure activities. Gender and task combination showed a pattern that was expected: a negative effect on associational activities and a positive effect on individual activities. Informal group activities are unaffected by these indicators. Similarly, people with many time problems have a smaller share of associational activities and higher share of individual activities. From these results a clear pattern emerges; structural characteristics constrain the choice for the associational context, and people who have demanding agendas are more likely to

choose individual leisure activities. Informal group activities remain unaffected by these factors, however.

Education also explains part of the choice for a certain context. When respondents' educational level was higher, their proportion of social activities (associational + informal) was higher, at the expense of individual activities.

Table 4.3
Regression analyses of proportions associational, informal and individual activities on determinants

	Proportion associational[a]		Proportion informal[b]		Proportion individual[c]	
	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V	Model VI
Year	.000	-	.004**	-	-.005**	-
Cohorts:						
- until 1930 (ref)		0		0		0
- 1931-1945		.011*		.015**		-.026**
- 1946-1960		-.003		.020**		-.016*
- 1961-1975		-.012~		.027**		-.015~
- from 1976		.009		.046**		-.055*
Age		-.006**		-.002**		.008**
Age^2 (/100)		.005**		.002**		-.007**
Church attendance		-.000		.001*		-.001
Women (ref= men)		-.021**		-.003		.023**
Employed (ref= other)		.003		-.002		-.001
Combining tasks		-.007*		-.003		.010*
Education		.006**		.006**		-.012**
Time problems[d]		-.007**		.003		.004~
Values[d]:						
Relaxing & hobbies important		-.005		-.003		.008
Social contacts important		.006		-.006		.000
Self-development important		-.009*		.003		.006

[a] Model I: N = 17,546, R^2 = .000; Model IIa: N = 17,399 , R^2 = .056; Model IIb: N = 1,376, R^2 = .027; Model IIc: N = 7,050, R^2 = .063.
[b] Model III: N = 17,546, R^2 = .003; Model IVa: N = 17,399 , R^2 = .025; Model IVb: N = 1,376, R^2 = .016; Model IVc: N = 7,050, R^2 = .021.
[c] Model V: N = 17,546, R^2 = .002; Model Va: N = 17,327 , R^2 = .063; Model Vb: N = 1,369, R^2 = .035; Model Vc: N = 7,050, R^2 = .077.
[d] Results from separate analysis, data were only available in a few waves (effects controlled for gender, employment, combining tasks, education, age, age^2, church attendance).
*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

Finally, we tested the effects of three values which respondents could subscribe to. The results are shown in the bottom block of Table 4.3 (which is a separate analysis; these indicators were not available in all waves of measurement). In general, these values do not have strong effects. The importance of relaxing & hobbies and the importance of social contacts did not affect our dependent variables. However, there was a negative relationship between the importance of self-development and the

choice for the associational context. Or, reversely, when self-development was thought to be more important, informal group and individual activities were more often chosen (although the separate effects of self-development on the proportions informal and individual are non-significant).

As argued in the introductory section, the indicators in Table 4.3 may also explain the trends. Table 4.4 explores whether (population changes in) these variables explain informalization. The variables were entered in different models and the change in the coefficient of the year of measurement was analyzed (see data section). We only entered the variables that showed significant effects (and the appropriate sign) in Table 4.3. Since the proportion of associational activities did not change, Table 4.4 also represents the inverse of the decrease in individual activities.

As Table 4.4 shows, informalization followed a pattern of cohort replacement. When cohort differences were entered into the model, the coefficient of the year of measurement was no longer significant, and approximately zero. However, this is not really a substantive explanation, since it remains unknown what makes the cohorts different. The aging of the population, on the other hand, suppressed the trend, after entering controls for age and age-squared, the year coefficient was 25% larger. Older people perform a slightly smaller share of their leisure activities in informal groups; the rise in life expectancy therefore suppresses the trend. Finally, the increase in the average educational level between 1975 and 2005 explained 44% of the informalization trend; the higher educated more often participate in informal groups than the lower educated, and their number has grown.

Table 4.4
Regression of proportion informal activities on year of measurement and explanatory variables

	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV
Year of measurement	.004**	-.000	.005**	.002**
Cohorts:				
- until 1930 (reference)				
- 1931-1945		V		
- 1946-1960		V		
- 1961-1975		V		
- from 1976		V		
Age			V	
Age^2 (/100)			V	
Education				V
Change coefficient (%)	-	-102%	+25%	-44%

*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

4.7 Discussion and Conclusions

In this paper, we tested the individualization and informalization hypotheses on leisure activities in the Netherlands between 1975 and 2005. In line with previous

research (De Hart & Dekker, 1999; Van den Berg & De Hart, 2008), we found that the absolute number of leisure activities people perform in voluntary associations remained the same between 1975 and 2005. The conclusions are more solid than previous ones, however, as our data included a wide range of possible leisure activities (and thus many possible memberships) instead of one question on participation in leisure associations (the conventional indicator in many general surveys). Additionally, we argued that one should simultaneously look at the developments in the informal sphere and at individual leisure activities to assess issues of decline-of-community. Our analyses showed that a process of informalization has taken place; the share of leisure activities in informal groups has grown. However, contrary to popular beliefs, this was not at the expense of activity in voluntary associations. Instead, the rise in informal group activity came hand in hand with a decrease in individual activities, while the share of leisure activities in voluntary associations remained the same. In other words, we did not find a (general) individualization trend. However, we also witnessed that specific domains of leisure can diverge from these general trends; e.g., in the field of sports individual activities are gaining importance over associational activities.

This has some implications for future research. First, it can be read as a warning against drawing far-reaching conclusions based on membership numbers. We need to look at alternative social contexts as well. In the case of sports, we found that individualization is taking place although the activity in associations slightly increased. Second, the consequences of informalization and individualization are likely to be very different. We know little about the side-effects of informal group participation vis-à-vis associational participation, but recently, Green and Brock (2005) found that participation in informal groups can help improving one's skills and enhance social resources, partly similar to those of associations, and partly different. It is unlikely that individual activities can bring about the same effects; although individual activities may still enhance certain (civic) skills (Schudson, 2006; Van Ingen & Van Eijck, 2009), they do not create social resources by way of definition. It would be interesting for future research to elaborate on the different functions informal groups and voluntary associations can fulfill, so that we know what we gain or lose when their importance in- or decreases.

Although our data enabled a unique overview of the social contexts of leisure activities with a time span of 30 years, our study also has several limitations. One of them is that we analyzed the number of activities people performed, not the duration of those activities. It might still be possible that individualization occurred in terms of the total time budget, i.e., if the duration of individual activities has expanded. Furthermore, our analyses did not include indicators of media use (which were not measured uniformly in all survey waves); the activities we analyzed shared a potential social character. It remains unclear how inclusion of these indicators would affect our conclusions; it is clear that the number of people who watch TV increased

between 1975 and 2005, but on the other hand, the number of people that listen to the radio or read may have gone down simultaneously.

Our analyses also provided us with information about who chooses what social context and how this can help explain the trends. Younger cohorts showed larger proportions of informal group activities, but not necessarily a larger share of individual activities. Cohort replacement has driven the informalization trend between 1975 and 2005. This also means that – when these cohorts maintain their differences – future cohort replacement will cause further informalization. Although our data do not allow us to further explore what causes the cohort differences, one obvious explanation that comes to mind is the rapid expansion of information and communication technologies, which offer extended possibilities to maintain social contacts. Younger cohorts are the first ones to embrace these new techniques, which not only makes it easier for them to maintain their social networks, but also to mobilize people for leisure pursuits.

Education is also an important factor in the choice of certain leisure activities; the highly educated show larger shares of social activities (associational + informal context) than the low educated. This finding is in line with previous research, in which the highly educated were found to have larger social networks and greater social skills (Lin, 2001), and more pro-social behavior in general (Gesthuizen, et al., 2008). Education also helps explain the informalization trend between 1975 and 2005, since the average educational level rose in the population in this period and the higher educated show greater informal group activity.

Finally, there are indications that the proportions of individual and informal group activities go up when associational activities do not provide sufficient flexibility or freedom of choice: respondents who subscribed to the importance of self-development and respondents who faced time problems were less inclined to choose leisure activities in the associational context. This was also true for women and those who combine household and work tasks (either men or women). The main substitution for the associational activities seems to be individual activities among these groups; informal activities remain largely unaffected by structural constraints.

In conclusion, we have shown there has been no decline of social involvement in the field of leisure between 1975 and 2005; people have not increasingly turned to individual leisure activities. However, there has been a change in the nature of social activities: informal group activities are gaining importance (while associational activity remains the same). Given these results, there is no reason to fear the *dissolution of associational life* as our title somewhat provocatively suggested, but – as scientific researchers – we may want to expand the topic of our study, and not only consider voluntary association participation, but also participation in informal settings. The degree to which these consist of similar interactions and the degree to which they have similar outcomes deserve the attention of future research.

5. Leisure and Social Capital: An Analysis of Types of Company and Activities[1]

Abstract

The relation between leisure activities and social capital is examined in this paper. Focus is on two dimensions: the company in which the activities were performed (household members versus friends and acquaintances), and the nature of the activities (productive versus consumptive). Data are employed from a time use survey conducted in the United Kingdom in 2000. Productive activities were positively related to the social capital indicators of civic engagement and helping and consumptive activities were not. The type of activity mattered more than the type of company. Leisure activities especially furthered people's social capital among groups that were already gifted with high levels of civic engagement and helping.

[1] A slightly different version of this chapter, with Koen van Eijck as co-author, was published in *Leisure Sciences* (Van Ingen & Van Eijck, 2009).

5.1 Introduction

Social capital has recently become prominent on the agendas of leisure researchers (e.g., Glover & Hemingway, 2005). Although the definition of social capital is a topic of disagreement, Putnam's (1993) interpretation has been influential. He defines social capital as a collective good consisting of civic engagement, trust, and reciprocity, which helps solve collective action problems.

Many leisure activities do not fall within this description of social capital since they are typically characterized by informal social connections (Putnam, 2000) rather than by more formal civic engagement. However, according to Putnam's argument, they can have a positive effect on social capital. Having a drink in a bar, playing a game, or visiting a concert are occasions where the company of others is enjoyed and bonds with friends, relatives, and acquaintances are strengthened. "Like pennies dropped in a cookie jar, each of these encounters is a tiny investment in social capital" (Putnam, 2000, p. 93). Leisure activities can create social networks, and these networks are often helpful in creating social capital. Volunteers, for example, are often recruited through networks (Wilson, 2000). They are asked to join by people they know, or they find out about opportunities through their personal contacts. Similarly, networks play an important role in stimulating political activity (Verba, et al., 1995). Moreover, some leisure activities may help in acquiring skills (e.g., planning, organizing, or administering) that are conducive to formal participation.

Formal participation means the social participation that consists of involvement in voluntary associations. It takes place in an organizational setting with rules of membership and boards that govern the action. Informal social networks, on the other hand, are more loosely defined, self-organized, and often spontaneous and flexible (Newton, 1999). Leisure activities are often accompanied by this informal sociability either as a by-product or as the main goal. Although time budget studies often reveal that informal sociability is more important in people's everyday lives than formal participation (Van Ingen, 2008), the former is studied less often. Reasons for this lack of attention could be that types of informal connections are harder to grasp in questionnaires (Stolle & Rochon, 1998), or that formal participation is seen as "the higher form of social involvement" (Putnam, 2000, p. 95). Unlikely, however, is that all leisure interactions will positively affect social capital. Many leisure activities do not build or maintain networks at all. We, therefore, distinguish between leisure activities on the basis of the type of activity and the type of company in which these activities are undertaken.

Knowing how characteristics of leisure pursuits affect social capital is important as is knowing which people are most involved in the leisure activities positively related to social capital. Do gender, education, and income make the same difference as they do regarding formal social participation? If so, the social networks and experiences that arise from leisure activities could be part of the explanation of

the inequalities in voluntary association involvement. On the other hand, if leisure mostly contributes to the social capital of people who are least likely to generate it otherwise, leisure might help reduce the gaps in associational participation.

The purpose of this study is to examine whether leisure activities and social capital are interrelated by examining the effects of types of company, the influence of different activities, and who benefits from these connections. By focusing on these issues, a better understanding of the relation between leisure activities and social capital can be gained along with how this relation emerges. To answer the questions, data are employed from the time use survey that was held in the United Kingdom in 2000. In this survey, respondents kept track of their activities in a diary and recorded their company.

5.2 Background and Hypotheses

Social Capital

Social capital has been the subject of dispute since different meanings are ascribed in different scholarly fields. We will not address this discussion in this paper but we acknowledge other interpretations (e.g., by Bourdieu, (1986), and by Coleman, (1990)). We applied Putnam's (1993) perspective on social capital despite some of its shortcomings.

In his reasoning, social capital is a collective good that facilitates collective action:

> Voluntary cooperation is easier in a community that has inherited a substantial stock of social capital, in the form of norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement. Social capital here refers to features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions. (Putnam, 1993, p. 167)

This perspective is labeled the *neo-Tocquevillean* approach to social capital (Warren, 2001). It deals mainly with participation in voluntary associations, trust, and reciprocity. These components of social capital are claimed to be related to each other as *virtuous circles* and the causal relationships between them are bi-directional (Brehm & Rahn, 1997).

Although many scholars adapt these ideas, the works of Putnam (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) also evoke considerable criticism. For instance, the interrelations between the parts of social capital have been questioned. According to Fischer (2005), correlations between them are too low to constitute a coherent concept. Fischer advocated the use of alternative old terms such as individualism or privatism. Another argument against Putnam's explanation of social capital is a general lack of causal explanations (Stolle, 2001). Which mechanisms cause the virtuous circles within social capital, or how effects arise as a result of (sufficient levels of) social capital is unclear.

Another important question is what the driving forces behind social capital are. To some extent, the demographic profiles of persons with high levels of civic engagement and trust give an indication. People with high incomes, high education levels, and high status jobs show both greater levels of civic engagement and larger networks with better network positions (Curtis, Grabb, & Baer, 1992; DiMaggio, 1991; Schlozman, et al., 1999). Together, the skills, motivations, and networks of these people strongly encourage participation (Verba, et al., 1995).

What Leisure and With Whom

Leisure activities can help build and maintain the networks and skills that make for social capital as Bourdieu (1986 [1979]) stated, "The reproduction of social capital presupposes an unceasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed" (p. 250). Many leisure activities go together with intended or unintended sociability either as the main goal (e.g., visits), or as a by-product of some other goal (e.g., playing a game of soccer, attending a concert). In both cases, spending time together affects people's social bonds.

Not all leisure activities, however, have positive social capital consequences. The characteristics of the leisure settings may matter. One important distinction is the type of company people have. In this respect, a twofold distinction is made between the company of household members versus other companions. By other companions, we refer to friends and acquaintances outside the household (cf. Warde, Tampubolon, & Savage, 2005). Whereas bonds with household members can facilitate emotional and social support, bonds with wider social circles outside the household can be conducive to civic engagement, trust, and reciprocity. Within these secondary associations with companions, people may hear opinions different from their own and interact with persons from diverse social backgrounds. Following the neo-Tocquevillean argument, these interactions create schools of democracy. According to Warren (2001), "De Tocqueville argued that secondary associations draw individuals out of their primary associations, educating them about their dependence upon others" (p. 30). These wider networks and more democratic values should make people more likely to become civically and politically engaged, and to trust and help others (Anheier & Kendall, 2002; Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Verba, et al., 1995; Wilson, 2000).

Another factor of importance in the relation between leisure and social capital is the type of activities. The need for this additional distinction can be illustrated by the example of watching television. As our analyses will show, watching television is a leisure activity that is relatively social since people often watch with others. Few scholars would claim, however, that watching television is conducive to social capital. On the contrary, television is often claimed to impede civic participation (Uslaner, 1998). First, it does not build extensive social networks, because the company for watching television often consists of spouses and children. Second,

because the activity is passive (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), little opportunity exists for the creation or consolidation of social ties. Finally, watching television is less conducive to the learning of civic or social skills than more (inter)active pastimes.

Putnam (2000) also argued that the nature of one's activities must be taken into account when relating them to social capital. He argued that *doing* things together (i.e., productive activities) is better for social capital than *watching* together (i.e., consumptive activities). Productive refers to leisure activities that are active, creative, directed towards a (common) goal, and often involves cooperation. Consumptive refers to those activities in which participants are often spectators, undergoing certain experiences, or using material or cultural goods. According to Putnam, consumption is gaining importance over production. For example in sports, "while Americans are spending less time doing sports, we are spending more time and money watching sports now than we were only a few decades ago" (p. 113). The change can also be witnessed in other fields as Putnam further suggested, "This same phenomenon – observing up, doing down – appears in other spheres of American life ... by many measures, "doing" culture (as opposed to merely consuming it) has been declining" (p. 114). In political science, a similar turn from active involvement to spectatorship was found. Scholars have observed the rise of the *monitorial citizen* (Schudson, 1998), the *political spectator* (Van Deth, 2000), and the *political consumer* (Stolle, et al., 2005).

The phenomenon of consumption has a bad reputation among scholars interested in furthering social capital, civic skills, and political participation. The idea that community corrodes and civil society declines due to increasing individualization and consumerism has captured social scientists since the 1950s (Aldridge, 2003). According to Bellah et al. (1986), individualism, which holds independence and self-reliance in high esteem and is often seen to go hand in hand with consumerism, is only sustainable if it is held in check by traditional values such as in the US, the republican tradition and the biblical tradition. These traditions are thought to instill a civic virtue, a moral engagement, and a concern for social justice. Where these traditional values flourish, Bellah et al. speak of community. In contrast to communities, they posit lifestyle enclaves where people share little more than private consumption tastes. Such lifestyle enclaves can be fragile, shallow, and compartmental in that they involve only a limited part of the individual's life and are restricted to people with similar leisure interests.

Although the mainstream of research considers consumption and social capital as negatively related, some scholars argue that consumptive activities do not have to be entirely passive. Holt (1995) argued that consumptive leisure activities are embedded in social worlds. Spectators, for example, often share their experiences through group interaction. Thus, shared consumption of leisure experiences can serve to build affiliation and enhance distinction from others

resulting in constructing and sustaining meaningful ties between otherwise heterogeneous consumers.

Notwithstanding Holt's (1995) nuanced perspective, Putnam (2000) holds the distinction between doing things and consuming things to be crucial. He claimed that productive activities create stronger bonds than consumptive activities. In his view, social capital is generated through cooperation and collective efforts. Hemingway (1999) also argued that "(1) the more the individual participates actively in social structures, (2) the more autonomy the individual experiences, and (3) the more her/his capacities develop, then (4) the greater the accumulation of social capital" (p. 157). We also believe that each of Hemingway's conditions are probably met somewhat better by doing things together than by consuming or watching things together. The more autonomously individuals participate in creating their leisure, rather than just consuming it, the more likely the resulting social capital will contribute to strong citizenship (Glover & Hemingway, 2005).

Unfortunately, the distinction between productive and consumptive activities has not been defined well in previous research. For the operationalization of the concepts we, therefore, opted for an expert panel to evaluate leisure activities (as the data section of this paper will explain).

Hypotheses

The considerations outlined allow the formulation of hypotheses about the relation between elements of leisure time and social capital. First, previous literature and theory showed that extensive networks are more likely to increase one's social capital than core networks. Further, spending leisure time alone cannot be regarded as a source of social capital. This background led to the first two hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: The amount of leisure time spent with friends and acquaintances has a positive impact on social capital.

Hypothesis 2: The amount of leisure time spent with household members or alone has no impact on social capital.

Doing things together was more likely to contribute to social capital than watching or consuming things together. Hence, the next two hypotheses are:

Hypothesis 3: The amount of leisure time spent on productive activities has a positive impact on social capital.

Hypothesis 4: The amount of leisure time spent on consumptive activities has a negative impact on social capital.

Finally, the schools of democracy idea suggests that social capital is most likely to thrive if people actively do things together with persons from different backgrounds. Therefore, leisure activities that meet both these conditions are highly likely to result in the expansion of one's social capital, which informed the fifth hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5: The positive effects of productive activities and activities with friends and acquaintances will be larger when these two conditions are combined.

Finding out who benefits most from the connections between leisure and social capital is the topic of the last part of the results section. However, as these analyses are exploratory, we did not formulate hypotheses on the outcomes.

5.3 Data and Methods

The data used for this research come from the 2000 Time Use Survey (TUS) in the United Kingdom. This survey was organized by the Office for National Statistics and consisted of a diary and a questionnaire (Ipsos-RSL, 2002). The information about the leisure activities stems from the diaries, which were kept for two 24-hour days. For every 10 minutes, people registered what they had been doing, with whom, and where. In our analyses, we only used the adult (16 years of age and older) diaries. The children's diaries had a different format, and social capital items such as volunteering likely held different meanings for the youngest participants. The multivariate analyses were based on information from approximately 6,000 people. A relative large number of respondents (2,800) had to be omitted due to missing values on income. See Table 5.1.

Table 5.1
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Free time (hours/ day):					
… with at least one household member	8,814	0	14.79	2.88	2.43
… with at least one companion	8,814	0	13.31	1.51	1.73
… in any company	8,814	0	18.08	3.94	2.39
Productive	8,814	0	11.19	1.18	1.44
Consumptive	8,814	0	17.00	3.54	2.21
Unclassified	8,814	0	12.27	1.65	1.43
Helping (scale)	7,858	0	3	0.60	0.80
Civic engagement (scale)	8,467	0	3	0.25	0.56
Women	8,814	0	1	0.54	0.50
Age	8,814	16	98	45.17	17.73
Income	7,072	0	77.08	9.52	8.22
Education	8,473	1	4	2.34	1.22

A main advantage of using diaries is that they measure time use more factually than ordinary survey questions (Van den Broek, et al., 2004). The assessment of the time spent on activities is, therefore, more accurate using a diary than using a survey question. Another advantage is the wealth of information that results from the combination of activities, locations, and co-presence. The TUS was able to capture

virtually all activities of the respondents with corresponding places and company for 24 hours.

That the sampling method of the TUS results in observations that are not independent should be noted. First, a random sample of households was taken, after which people within the households were selected. Every respondent had to fill out a diary on a week day and a weekend day. As a result, data consisted of diaries nested in respondents, nested in households. To deal with this issue, we calculated the weighted mean of the two diaries per respondent representing an "average" day in the week. Next, we used robust variance estimation for cluster-correlated data (Williams, 2000). This procedure corrected the estimations of the standard errors in the analyses for the possible dependence of observations within the households (e.g., similarities between husbands and wives cause intra-cluster correlation).

Social Setting and Nature of Leisure Activities

For every ten minutes in the diary, respondents were asked to report the following: "What were you doing?" (primary activity), "What else were you doing?" (secondary activity), "Where were you?" (location), and "Were you with anybody?" (co-presence). During sleep and work, location and co-presence were not recorded. The activities people mentioned were coded afterwards into a broad range of categories including many leisure activities. For co-presence, we used three variables that were counts of the number of entries (corresponding to 10 minutes) in the diaries: time spent in company, time spent with household members, and time spent with companions. We use the term "companions" to refer to both friends and acquaintances, which was measured as "other people you know". Descriptives of all variables are shown in Table 5.1. In regression models, we also included a measure of the amount of leisure time spent alone.

Regarding the nature of the leisure time, we distinguished between consumptive and productive activities. Since previous research did not provide sufficiently detailed classification criteria, we organized an expert panel consisting of ten scholars from various fields in the social sciences. We presented the codebook of the diaries and gave a short introduction about productive and consumptive activities, in which we explicitly refrained from giving examples, suspecting this would bias our experts' judgement. Literally, the description (translated from Dutch) was: "Productive activities are characterized by an active dedication of the participant and working (together) towards a certain goal. This goal can be instrumental, but also expressive or creative. Consumptive activities are a passive form of spending time, characterized by the 'utilization' of certain goods (consumption in its narrow meaning), but also of experiences".

Subsequently, we asked them to classify each activity as: productive, consumptive, or undefined/ unclear. Only if a majority of the experts (six or more) came up with the same classification, an activity was recorded as either productive or consumptive. Using this classification, we calculated the time people spent on

productive, consumptive, and other undefined leisure activities (also shown in Table 5.1). Unfortunately, the full list of the coded activities is too elaborate to show here (it is available upon request from the author). Instead, we just give a few examples. Typical productive activities are: doing sports, making music, painting, having telephone conversations, studying (as leisure activity), gardening, and activities involving construction and repair. Examples of consumptive activities are: shopping, attending sports events, going to the movies or theatre, playing computer games, watching television and radio.

The social setting and nature of the leisure activities were interrelated. The strongest correlation (r = .39) was between the time spent in the company of household members and the time spent on consumptive activities. The time spent with household members was not significantly related to the engagement in productive activities (r = .00). Time spent with companions was positively related to undertaking productive activities (r = 0.13), but not significantly to consumptive activities (r = -.01).

Social Capital

One of the key components of social capital is civic engagement. We created a scale by summing the following items: registration of "organizational work" in the diary (recoded to yes/ no), registration of "participatory activities" in the diary (recoded to yes/ no), and having done voluntary work for a group or organization (i.e., in last 4 weeks; item from the questionnaire).

We computed a proxy for reciprocity by summing three items on helping: "looking after one sick, disabled, or elderly person (not living with respondent)", "having helped or provided a service for someone" (not a household member; during last 4 weeks), and registration of "informal help" in the diary (recoded to yes/ no).

Tetra choric correlations (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003) were calculated to assess the strength of the relationships between these binary variables. Both scales had high average inter-item correlations: r = 0.45 for helping and r = 0.62 for civic engagement. Table 5.1 lists their means and standard deviations. Unfortunately, the survey did not contain items on generalized trust.

Socioeconomic Background

When considering the relation between people's involvement in informal associations and social capital outcomes, spuriousness must be considered. Some people may be more active, informed, outgoing, or pressed for time than others and such differences may emerge simultaneously in independent and dependent variables. To deal with this issue, we included an elaborate set of relevant control variables in the analyses of the relation between leisure activities and social capital. These variables captured the most relevant economic, cultural, physical, and temporal resources that may affect people's leisure choices and their social capital.

Moreover, we used these variables to examine which people were most likely to spend their leisure time in ways that were conducive to social capital creation.

Age was entered as a continuous variable in the models ranging between 16 and 98 years of age in our sample. Preliminary analyses did not reveal significant deviations from linearity in the relation between age and the dependent variables.

Income was based on the gross monthly income of the household, which was averaged using equivalence scores to account for household composition (i.e., 1 for first adult, 0.7 for 2 or more adults and 0.5 for children). *Education* was entered as a continuous variable ranging from "no qualifications" to "degree level qualifications +" (four categories). *Employment* was a nominal variable with the categories: full-time/ part-time job (62%), retired (19%), homemaker (6%), and other (13%).

Household composition captured whether people had a partner and/or children in the household. Categories were: single person (13%), couple with children below 16 (28%), couple without children below 16 (43%), single parent with children below 16 (5%), single parent without children below 16 (3%), and other (7%). The division below/above 16 years allowed us to distinguish between households with relatively dependent versus independent children.

Originally, *ethnicity* (white, black, Asian, and other) and *population density* were included in the models. However, they did not show any significant effect. Therefore, we opted for presenting more parsimonious models, without the two variables.

5.4 Results

Leisure and Company

The coding of the diary entries contained 100 leisure activities. Before answering our hypotheses, we will first indicate to what extent leisure activities are undertaken in the company of others at all, and who these others are. To show the social context of some typical examples, Table 5.2 shows the percentages of the types of "co-presence." Successively, typical individual, household, companion, and combined activities are shown.

Some leisure activities were mostly performed alone. Jogging and running is an example (i.e., 57% of the time this activity was undertaken without any company). The same went for fitness, although the proportion of time spent on this activity with companions was close to the proportion of time doing it alone. Thus, because fitness is considered an "individual sport" (i.e., one does not need a partner or team) does not imply that people always practice it without company. Further, note that companions does not include unknown others. The third item in Table 5.2, finding information through the use of a computer, is an example of an activity that was often done alone, but also with household members. What people do on a computer mattered for the company. The activity "computer games" (activity 6) had

a different distribution as it was done alone less often, and more often with companions. Eating and watching television were typically done in the presence of household members. This finding is remarkable since television is often accused of impeding sociability (Putnam, 2000; Uslaner, 1998). However, as was argued earlier, company only does not suffice to build social networks. Table 5.2 lists three typical companion activities: social life, organizational work, and outdoor ball games. In 73%, 50%, and 87% of the time, respectively, these activities took place in the co-presence of friends and acquaintances. Finally, in some activities household members and companions typically mixed. Visits and feast were generally pastimes with companions, or with both household members and companions.

Table 5.2
Examples of the Co-Presence of Leisure Activities (Percentages)

	Co-presence			
	Alone	Household members	Companions	Both
Jogging and running	57	22	22	0
Fitness	43	14	41	2
Computing: seeking & reading information	45	47	4	5
Eating	18	52	21	10
TV watching	26	63	8	4
Computer games	29	45	20	6
Other social life[a]	2	9	73	16
Organizational work	24	15	50	11
Outdoor ball games	4	4	87	5
Visiting and receiving visitors	0	6	62	32
Feasts	1	9	47	43

[a] *Such as: clubbing, conversation with neighbor, outdoors with friends, was at a pub with a friend.*

Leisure and Civic Engagement

In Table 5.3 and Table 5.4, the company and productive/consumptive variables were introduced one by one. All effects were controlled for respondents' socioeconomic characteristics and standardized variables were used in the regression analyses to compare effect sizes within each model.

Models I and II in Table 5.3 show the effects of social context on civic engagement. In contrast to hypothesis 2, the time people spent on leisure activities alone was negatively related to civic engagement. Similarly, the time spent in any company showed a negative effect, which was caused by a non-significant effect of companions and a negative effect of household members (model II). The latter (β = -0.075) can be interpreted as: if time spent with household members went up by one standard deviation, civic engagement decreased by 0.079 standard deviations.

In the third model, the distinction between the types of activities was added. Spending time on productive leisure activities was positively related to civic engagement (β = 0.140). Consumptive activities, on the other hand, were negatively related to civic engagement (β = 0.088). That is, people who spent more of their time on consumptive leisure activities registered less involvement in voluntary associations and volunteering, while the opposite is true for time spent on productive activities. Thus, Hypotheses 3 and 4 were confirmed.

Table 5.3
Regression of Civic Engagement on Social Context and Productive / Consumptive Activities (Standardized Coefficients; Corrected Standard Errors)

	model I	model II	model III	model IV
Free time:				
... alone	-0.069**	-0.063**	-0.012	-0.012
... with any company	-0.079**			
... with at least one household member		-0.075**	-0.008	-0.008
... with at least one companion		-0.015	-0.013	-0.014
Productive activities			0.140**	0.141**
Consumptive activities			-0.088**	-0.089**
Interaction companion* productive				-0.008
R-square	0.062	0.062	0.85	0.085

Note. All models are controlled for gender, age, income, education, employment status, and household type.
** p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

Introducing the type of activity added 2.3% explained variance to the model but, more importantly, it also affected the significance of the context variables. The type of activity clearly mattered more than the type of company. The original negative effects of individual and household activities can be explained because they are more often consumptive than productive. Since no significant direct effects remain for the context variables, Hypothesis 2 was confirmed and Hypothesis 1 was refuted in the full model.

Finally, in model IV the interaction effect between co-presence of companions and productiveness was added. Contrary to our expectations (i.e., Hypothesis 5), no significant effect was found.

Leisure and Helping Behavior

Table 5.4 shows the results of the regression analysis of helping behavior. The effect of the time spent on individual leisure activities was again negative (in all models). The initial effect of social activities was not significant. A more detailed look, however, reveals the balance of two contradicting effects of social setting: a negative influence of household members and a (slightly stronger) positive influence of companions (model II). The latter also remained after adding the type of the

activities (model III), which confirms Hypothesis 1. The initial negative effect of household members disappeared after adding the type of activities, which is in line with Hypothesis 2.

Model III shows that productive and consumptive activities had significant and opposite effects, in line with what was expected (i.e., Hypotheses 3 and 4). Spending time on productive activities had a positive impact on helping ($\beta = 0.168$), whereas engaging in consumptive activities had a negative influence ($\beta = -0.059$). Adding the nature of the activities added some 3% explained variance to the model, but unlike what was found in the analysis of civic engagement, two out of three social context effects remained significant.

In the final model, an interaction effect was added to see whether the combination of companions and productiveness had an additional effect. Again, no such relationship was found.

Table 5.4
Regression of Helping Behavior on Social Context and Productive / Consumptive Activities (Standardized Coefficients; Corrected Standard Errors)

	model I	model II	model III	model IV
Free time:				
... alone	-0.087**	-0.080**	-0.044*	-0.044*
... with any company	-0.014			
... with at least one household member		-0.046**	0.007	0.007
... with at least one companion		0.059**	0.059**	0.060**
Productive activities			0.168**	0.167**
Consumptive activities			-0.059**	-0.058**
Interaction companion* productive				0.011
R-square	0.060	0.063	0.092	0.092

Note. All models are controlled for gender, age, income, education, employment status, and household type.
** p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

Socioeconomic Background, Leisure, and Cultural Capital

Finally, we examined what kind of people spent the most time on productive, consumptive, household, and companion leisure activities. The results are shown in Table 5.5.

Women spent less time on leisure activities in the company of household members and more on activities with companions compared to men, although the differences were small (e.g., women spent 0.149 hours or 9 minutes more on companion activities). This finding only concerned leisure time, implying that for example, activities related to housekeeping in the presence of children were not counted. Women spent considerably less time on both productive and consumptive activities probably because they had somewhat less total free time, and they spent more time on the category of "unknown" or "undecided" activities (activities that

were not unambiguously consumptive or productive according to our expert panel). The older respondents spent somewhat more time with household members and less time with companions. In general, the amount of leisure time increased with age, although this effect was likely not linear) and encouraged both productive and consumptive activities. Income turned out to be negatively related to consumptive activities. This finding may be explained because apart from various consumptive activities that cost money, various activities had little costs. Watching television is an example, which takes up a relatively large share of the consumptive category. Education had few clear-cut effects. The higher educated respondents spent more time on productive activities, and the effect was relatively strong. On the other hand, they spent comparably less time on consumptive activities. The differences regarding employment status and household composition were more or less as expected. The retired, homemakers, and "others" (e.g., the unemployed and students) had more leisure time at their disposal, which was mainly spent on consumptive activities and with household members. Concerning household composition, note that having children was at the expense of free time, and this effect was strongest for consumptive activities. Furthermore, single parents whose children did not live in the household spent significantly more time on consumptive activities compared to the reference group of couples without children.

Table 5.5
Regression of Time spent on Leisure Activities on Socioeconomic Characteristics
(Hours/Day; Unstandardized Coefficients; Corrected Standard Errors)

	With household member(s)	With companion(s)	Productive free time	Consumptive free time
Gender	-0.214**	0.149**	-1.950**	-3.013**
Age	0.024**	-0.024**	0.073**	0.076**
Income	-0.014**	-0.002	0.028	-0.117**
Education	-0.021	-0.034	0.750**	-0.784**
Employment status:				
- Full-time/ Part-time job (ref)	0	0	0	0
- Retired	1.788**	0.696**	1.568**	9.365**
- Homemaker	1.135**	0.015	1.830**	4.098**
- Other	0.922**	0.510**	2.643**	8.630**
Household composition:				
- Single person household	n.a.	0.632**	-0.702	0.811
- Couple with children	0.094	-0.514**	-1.512**	-2.084**
- Couple no children (ref)	0	0	0	0
- Single parent with chldr	-0.126	-0.154	-1.091*	-1.708*
- Single parent no chldr	-0.612**	0.072	-0.840	2.776**
- Other	-0.357*	-0.096	-1.444**	-0.456
R-square	0.168	0.063	0.069	0.222

** p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

What do these findings mean for social capital? Are people already well represented in formal participation more likely to expand their social capital through their leisure preferences? Or, is leisure offering an alternative route to social capital for the less

privileged? To answer these questions we combined the findings in Tables 5.3 and 5.4 with those in Table 5.5. Since we knew that the nature of the activities was more important than the company, we focused on the former.

For a number of groups, the indirect effects on social capital sum (more or less) to zero. For instance, women had a social capital "benefit" through their lower levels of consumptive free time, which was negatively related to social capital. However, they had a comparable disadvantage through productive activities. (Note that the strength of the effect of productive activities was greater than that of consumptive activities, for both civic engagement and helping). The indirect effects for age did not sum to zero. The effects of age on productive and consumptive activities were roughly the same size, but the former had a stronger connection to social capital. Therefore, the total indirect effect of age via leisure activities, on social capital was slightly positive. This finding was also true for income. Education had strong indirect relations: more time spent on productive activities and less on consumptive activities both evoked a social capital advantage for highly educated respondents. Regarding household composition, an indirect relation was found with single parents without children in the household, which was also strongly negative.

In summary, we concluded that through their leisure activities, the people who were already over-represented in voluntary associations, and who were already helpful, had an additional social capital benefit. This finding was true for older adults, people with higher incomes, and, especially, for the higher educated respondents.

5.5 Discussions and Conclusions

Interrelations existed between the informal world of leisure activities on the one hand, and civic engagement and helping behavior on the other. These were not necessarily positive, however. To some extent, the type of company in which the activities were performed mattered. Spending leisure time alone was negatively related to helping, whereas spending free time in the broader social circle of companions who were not household members was positively related to helping. In general, however, this impact of social context seemed to be limited. The effects were not strong, and for civic engagement they were not even significant. Far more important was the nature of the activities. Productive activities in which people are active, "creating" or "doing things," and working on common goals were positively related to social capital. But consumptive activities (i.e., passive pastimes, in which people are mere spectators, undergoing experiences, or utilizing goods) were negatively related to social capital. This finding is important to keep in mind when examining the relation between leisure activities and social capital. Researchers should ask: which type of activities and to a lesser extent, in what kind of company?

We offer several explanations for these connections. One argument concerns networks. Leisure activities can help create extended social networks, which can in turn stimulate civic participation or further helpfulness. Our findings do not make a strong case for this explanation, as the effects of social networks were either modest or lacking. Moreover, if the creation of social capital is about cooperation and working on common goals with diverse others, we would have expected an interaction effect between the time with companions and time spent on productive activities.

An alternative argument is that leisure activities may create certain skills (e.g., civic or social) that could be resources for social capital. This explanation is more in line with our findings and suggests why productive activities correlate positively with social capital while consumptive activities do not. People can develop skills as a result of productive activities (cf. Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Stebbins, 1992). However, this explanation does not account for the negative effect of consumptive activities (i.e., if people simply learn nothing from consumptive activities, effects would be lacking). Our analyses seem to be in line with the more pessimistic ideas about consumption and social capital. Could consumption drive people away from social capital, as Putnam (2000) supposes? Does too much consumptive leisure indicate, if not encourage, a degree of lethargy that is incompatible with social capital indicators? Unfortunately, we do not have the information to examine the exact mechanisms at work, but future researchers may want to pursue these questions.

If causality flows from leisure activities to social capital, whose social capital is most likely to be mobilized or stimulated through leisure? On the whole, leisure activities are quite democratic. Virtually everybody spends time on leisure activities and does so with family members and friends. This picture changes, however, in looking more carefully at the kind of activities that are conducive to social capital. As our analyses have demonstrated, people who are known to be gifted with high levels of social capital are the ones who enjoy further benefits through their leisure choices. This conclusion was particularly true for highly educated people, who were more involved in productive and less in consumptive activities, which may give them a double social capital boost. Similar arguments can be made for people with high incomes and the elderly. Thus, even though leisure can clearly contribute to social capital formation and the behavior that goes with it, we encounter a so-called Matthew effect since those who are already rich in social capital are most likely to expand it further and become even more advantaged in this respect.

Our analyses have several limitations. Our data does not allow us to pass judgment on the causal order of our concepts. We found that productive leisure activities were positively related to social capital and that the reverse was true for consumptive activities. However, the relation could go both ways. The issue of causal order cannot be solved until applicable panel data come available. Furthermore, we have attempted to deal with the risk of spurious effects by

introducing various control variables that might disturb our findings, such as education. As a result, spuriousness is less likely, but it cannot be ruled out completely.

Although we embrace the idea of measuring engagement in informal associations using diary data, the analyses might improve substantially if the measurement of the company was more detailed. Time use surveys offer great possibilities of grasping the social character of leisure activities that are otherwise hard to measure in a quantitative fashion. However, although these data contained accurate indicators on household members as company, non-household members were only captured by one broad indicator. Future surveys may want to include more detailed measures, such as a distinction between friends, acquaintances, colleagues, or neighbors. This would allow for a more thorough examination of the functions of different types of social contacts. The lack of detail in this measure might also affect outcomes. Theoretically, it is plausible that only "weak ties" further civic engagement, while our measurement of companions also included strong ties, such as those with best friends and family outside the household. This could be one of the reasons why effects of social contexts were small or lacking.

Notwithstanding these critical remarks, our analyses have demonstrated the potential relevance of leisure research for the study of social capital. We encourage further research in this area.

Part II: The Determinants of Voluntary Association Participation in Perspective

6. Changes in the Determinants of Volunteering: Participation and Time Investment between 1975 and 2005 in the Netherlands[1]

Abstract

Previously, researchers have examined whether societal developments such as educational expansion, secularization, and changes on the job market affect levels of volunteering. We extent this research, by studying the distribution of volunteering, or possible changes in the way volunteering is determined. We found that volunteering has become more common among the economically inactive (pensioners and homemakers), at the expense of the employed. Furthermore, the relation between church attendance and volunteering has become stronger; while volunteering has gone down in general, churchgoers increase their volunteering for religious organizations. The role of education has also changed; differences between lower and higher educated in their inclination to volunteer have virtually disappeared and the former have enlarged their time investment considerably. Explanations for these changes, as well as their implications for research are discussed.

[1] This chapter is currently under review. Paul Dekker is co-author.

6.1 Introduction

The most important aim of this paper is to examine whether the determinants of volunteering have changed from the 1970s until the present day. Researchers often treat the determinants of volunteering as given, as facts of life. This is not surprising given the accumulation of empirical evidence that indicates that volunteering is more often done by the highly educated, churchgoers, and people with children, among others. However, there are also good reasons to question the stability of these determinants through time. Times are changing, and several societal changes have occurred over the past decades that are related to some of the determinants of volunteering. E.g., as a result of educational expansion, the distribution of educational attainment in the population nowadays is radically different from thirty or forty years ago, and the meaning of being lower and higher educated has changed. The implications of these developments on the determinants of volunteering are not very well-documented. Therefore, our aim in the current paper is to examine to what extent well-know determinants have gained or lost importance, or to what extent the effect sizes of these determinants have changed.

In our analyses, we will look at both participation in volunteering (the decision to do something) and time investment (the decision to spend a certain number of hours). The latter is less often the topic of research than the former. When we look at the production of volunteering, both the number of people that are involved and the hours they invest are important. Voluntary associations and organizations need a sufficient number of volunteers, e.g., for the sake of legitimacy and mobilization, but they also need participants who are willing to spend a considerable amount of time, to take care of demanding organizational tasks. Although strictly the decision to participate and to invest a certain amount of time may not be fully independent choices, we will argue that the factors that determine participation are different from those determining time investment.

Similar to Andersen, Curtis & Grabb (2006), we analyze diary data to examine volunteering. These data give accurate and factual information about the way people spend their time. In contrast to their data, ours are only representative of the Netherlands. However, we believe that the results of our analyses will have broader implications. First, volunteering in the Netherlands is widely spread and the share of people who participate resembles that of the Scandinavian countries, the United States, and Canada (Curtis, et al., 2001; Pichler & Wallace, 2007). Second, the processes driving the changes – notably educational expansion, secularization, and changes on the labor market – have occurred in many Western societies (e.g., Gesthuizen, et al., 2008; Inglehart & Baker, 2000).

6.2 Determinants of Volunteering and Possible Changes

Many societal changes have occurred in the Netherlands in the past decades. We will focus on four developments, which are expected to affect the determinants of volunteering: secularization, educational expansion, changes in the labor market, and women's emancipation. Note that we do not aim to study the effects that these developments have on the (average) *level* of volunteering; we study whether these developments brought about a different *distribution* of volunteering in the population.

Religiosity is a strong determinant of volunteering (De Hart & Dekker, 2005; e.g., Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006; Wilson & Janoski, 1995). This can be explained in part by the fact that churches are organizers of many forms of volunteering. Additionally, belonging to a religious community is claimed to enlarge peoples' social networks (and increases chances of being asked) and stimulates altruistic values. However, the role of religion has changed in the Netherlands as a result of secularization processes. As in many Western European countries church attendance has declined substantially from the 1960s.[1] In our dataset, 25% went to church on a weekly basis in the sample of 1975, whereas in 2005 this was only 11%.

What implications does this development have for the effect of church attendance on volunteering? The answer is not straightforward *a priori*. The change in group sizes of churchgoers and non-churchgoers does not necessarily imply a change in effect size. One may argue that the ones who stay involved in church will be the ones with the strongest beliefs and dedication, and thus the greatest inclination to volunteer, which suggests that the effect of church attendance becomes stronger. However, the ones who leave church may at the same time be more likely to volunteer than the ones who did not go to church in the first place, thereby increasing the likelihood of volunteering in the group of non-churchgoers.

We believe that the effect of church attendance on volunteering increases when average church attendance goes down, but based on different reasoning. Since a substantial part of volunteering is organized around religious communities, fewer people become available for recruitment. If religious organizations try to keep up as much of the volunteering as possible, this means that every churchgoer will be more likely to be asked to volunteer. Additionally, the shrinking religious community may become more cohesive and homogeneous as a result of secularization. In turn, greater social control and mutual commitment may increase group pressure to respond positively to volunteering requests. This expectation is in line with findings from cross-national research; Ruiter and De Graaf (2006) found that the effect of individual church attendance on volunteering is stronger in countries with low average levels of church attendance.

[1] We are aware of the fact that this is only a very limited indicator and that secularization is a fiercely debated concept (e.g., Gorski & Altinordu, 2008).

Education is a second strong determinant of volunteering, whose influence may have changed. It is outside the scope of this paper to examine how education affects volunteering, but various explanations have been suggested, such as its ability to stimulate civic skills and values, but also through its positive influence on social skills and network size (Oesterle, et al., 2004; Wilson, 2000; Wilson & Musick, 1998). Educational expansion has been one of the most important societal changes in Western societies over the past decades (Gesthuizen, et al., 2008), with many consequences. However, as with church attendance, arguing how this should change the effect of education on volunteering is not straightforward.

Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry (1996) argue that two possible mechanisms are responsible for the relationship between education and political participation: stimulation of cognitive and verbal skills (absolute effect) and the sorting of people into more and less privileged network positions (relative effect). Volunteering – although less elitist than political participation (with the exception of voting) – is known to correlate to these social networks; people in privileged positions are more exposed to recruitment efforts (Bekkers, Völker, Van der Gaag, & Flap, 2007). If volunteering is a positional good, and since the better network positions are increasingly occupied by the people with the highest education (i.e., with a university degree), one would expect the effect of education on volunteering to become stronger with educational expansion (one would expect a strong decrease in the group with intermediate education).

However, there is also a contesting line of reasoning. Empirical evidence from cross-national research has shown that in countries with strong educational expansion, the effect of education on several indicators of social participation is smaller (Gesthuizen, et al., 2008). Cohort comparison also showed that the effect of education on volunteering is decreasing in the Netherlands (Kraaykamp, 1996). This can be explained using Bourdieu's concept of distinction (1986 [1979]). His central assertion is that people strive for consolidation or improvement of their status positions, by deploying certain resources that give competitive advantages. Good education can be one of these resources. However, when more and more people become highly educated, the competitive advantage of education diminishes (and other resources may become more valuable). In other words, as a side-effect of educational expansion, the sorting effect of education decreases; education becomes a less valuable resource. Following this reasoning, one would expect the effect of education on volunteering to diminish.

Labor market position is the third determinant of volunteering we expect to have changed. The influence of holding a job on volunteering has been argued to be twofold: a job expands people's networks and enhances their skills on the one hand, and limits their free time on the other hand. The former should encourage, the latter should discourage volunteering (Putnam, 2000; Rotolo & Wilson, 2007)(see the next section on participation versus time investment). Similarly, groups with a different kind of employment status have their own specific resources that may influence

volunteering. Students and homemakers may be integrated into alternative networks, of student campuses (Crossley, 2008b) and of local communities (Lin, 2000). Pensioners and the unemployed have most free time at their disposal. The sum of the effects of these differences in resources is hard to predict, and remains an empirical question. However, it is clear that over the past decades the size and character of these groups have changed. The most dramatic change in our sample is among homemakers: in 1975 30% of the respondents indicated that they were (full-time) homemakers, whereas by 2005 this had gone down to 10%. The share that is employed and the share that is retired went up (from 41 to 52% and 8 to 17% respectively).

Along with these developments, shifts have occurred in the resources of different employment status groups. First, they have started to face time pressure to a diverging extent. Over the past decades, time pressure among working families has increased strongly, as a result of having to cope with an accumulation of responsibilities from work and family life (Van der Lippe, 2007). The other groups – except students – did not see a similar increase in time pressure. Furthermore, the resources and possibly also motivation of the pensioned has changed. Moen and Fields (2002) claim that the character of the stage in the life course around retirement has changed. An increase in health, wealth, and longevity has caused a change in mentality, in which this stage is no longer seen as part of the traditional old age, but as a stage with meaningful and productive alternative activities. And one of them may be volunteering: "... changes in the cultural meaning of retirement have led individuals to increasingly view volunteering as a normative role for the elderly" (Einolf, 2009, p. 182). This is in line with findings by Mutchler, Burr, and Caro (2003), who found that retirees were more likely to start volunteering than those who remained employed (within the same age group) in the US.

Following these arguments, we expect that a shift has occurred in volunteering between groups with different employment status. The possibilities of homemakers, the unemployed, and especially pensioners to volunteer have improved considerably compared to the employed. We expect a different distribution of volunteering among these groups accordingly.

The final determinant we study is gender. Several differences between men and women have been found regarding volunteering. However, rather than the (aggregate) level of participation these differences mainly concern their type of participation (Paxton, et al., 2007; Popielarz, 1999). Obviously, women's emancipation has been a very important societal development over the past decades. Changing norms on labor market participation and the division of household tasks, and – at least in Western Europe – increased support by social policy measures have improved the resources of women, which may have affected their possibilities for volunteering (Van Ingen & Van der Meer, 2009). Wollebaek and Selle (2005) found that this caused a change in the associational participation by women in Norway;

they are no longer involved in segregated associations, but increasingly intermingle with men in a broad range of associations.

The implications of these developments for the effect of gender on volunteering remains hard to predict, given that we study volunteering on the aggregate level in this paper. However, by way of exploration, we will include changes in the effect of gender in our models.

Up to this point we mainly focused on changes, but we also expect that certain determinants remain stable, and we control for these factors in our models. Connected to employment status is the role of age. Several researcher have analyze and discussed the relationship between age and volunteering (e.g., Goss, 1999), however, we believe that life course events (which obviously correlate with age) such as retirement or entering a job are more important than age as such. After controlling for these events, age (its direct effect on volunteering) looses much of its importance. However, we include age in our models to make sure that the effect of employment status is not spurious.

Another determinant of volunteering whose effect we do not expect to change (but whose effect we expect to be different for participation and time investment) is household status (Rotolo, 2000). We see no reason why the role of marriage or being a parent would not remain to be of influence on volunteering. In general, people may be drawn into volunteering by their partners and children (Wilson & Musick, 1997), and volunteering can even be "[...] organized by and around family relations" (Wilson, 2000, p. 225). Through the memberships of their children (e.g., in clubs), or through activities at school, parents have higher chances to be asked to volunteer. This integrative function is strongest for children who are going to school, but are not yet independent (Rotolo & Wilson, 2007).

6.3 Participation versus Time Investment

From the perspective of voluntary associations and organizations it is not only important to have a sufficient number of volunteers, but also to be able to call on people who are willing to spend a considerable amount of time on activities for the organization. However, the current knowledge about what determines volunteering mainly concerns the (generic) decision to volunteer, not the subsequent number of hours people are willing to spend. We believe that the determinants of this time investment may be partly different from the determinants of the choice to participate, and we will separate the two in our analyses.

Two factors that are known to have a mixed influence on volunteering are work and being a parent. Putnam (2000) argues that "getting a job outside the home has two opposing effects on community involvement – it *increases opportunity* for making new connections and getting involved, while at the same time it *decreases time* available for exploring those opportunities" (p. 194). Similarly, we know that

(school aged) children encourage volunteering by their parents in schools and clubs (Rotolo, 2000), but at the same time running a household consumes a considerable share of the time budget, and limits the possibilities of parents to be involved in other activities, such as volunteering (Oesterle, et al., 2004). In sum, work and being a parent have an integrating yet restricting effect; they enlarge chances of participation, but decrease the time invested.

Although differences between participation and time investment are less straightforward for other determinants, we will include them in our models by way of exploration. For example, researchers have come up with arguments why education affects the decision to volunteer, such as the sorting effect into network position that was discussed earlier. This makes the highly educated more likely to be asked to volunteer, but it does not mean it will also have a positive effect on the time spent on volunteering.

6.4 Data and Methods

We used the Dutch Time Use Survey (DTUS) (Breedveld, 2000) for the analyses in the current paper. Between 1975 and 2005, this survey has been conducted seven times (every five years), and for each wave a representative sample of the Dutch population of 12 years and older was drawn. The survey consisted of a questionnaire and a diary part. In the latter, respondents kept track of their activities and reported what they had been doing for every 15 minutes of one week (in October). As a result of the high level of involvement that is required, response rates tend to be somewhat lower than in other surveys in the Netherlands. Nonetheless, there is no evidence that the response was different, or that bias occurred as a result of people's busyness (Van Ingen, et al., 2009).

Volunteering

Our measure of volunteering is the sum of five categories of coded activities from respondents' diaries: (1) activities leading social and political organizations, (2) activities concerning interest representations and politics, (3) activities for other voluntary associations, (4) volunteering, informal care to non-family members (measured as one category), and (5) activities for religious organizations. These activities are all voluntary activities that produce collective goods, mainly in an organizational context. In other words, we examine volunteering in a broad sense, consisting of activities respondents classified as volunteering themselves and activities they classified differently but which are usually seen as volunteering. Table 6.1 shows descriptive statistics for the variables used.

Independent Variables

Church attendance was recoded from nine categories into a (approximately) continuous variable that represents the number of church visits per year. Education was recoded into a nominal variable with three categories: low, intermediate and high. Respondents' employment status consisted of five categories: studying, employed,[2] homemaker, unemployed or disabled, and pensioned. "Women" is a dummy variable that captures gender differences. Similarly, the dummy variable partner indicates whether the respondent was living together with a partner at the time of the survey. Whether respondents had children living in the household (and of what age) was measured in four categories: none, youngest child between 0 and 5 years, youngest child between 6-14 years, and youngest child over 15 years. Age was recoded into five groups, ranging from 12-24 years to 70 years and older. The variable "wave", finally, indicates the year of measurement (1975 = 0, 1980 = 1, ..., 2005 = 6). In our models, we only show the controlled effects of these variables. Except related to volunteering, most of them are also related to each other; thus, the uncontrolled effects run the risk of being spurious.

Table 6.1
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Volunteering (hours/ week)	4,892	4.39	4.81	0.25	56.75
Volunteering (ref = none)	17,704	0.28	-	0	1
Church attendance	17,516	11.02	19.11	0	52
Education: low	17,583	0.35	-	0	1
Education: intermediate	17,583	0.44	-	0	1
Education: high	17,583	0.21	-	0	1
Employment: studying	17,676	0.15	-	0	1
Employment: employed	17,676	0.47	-	0	1
Employment: homemaker	17,676	0.24	-	0	1
Employment: unemployed/ disabled	17,676	0.06	-	0	1
Employment: pensioner	17,676	0.09	-	0	1
Women	17,704	.57	-	0	1
Partner	17,704	0.67	-	0	1
Children: none	17,704	0.42	-	0	1
Children: youngest 0-5 yrs	17,704	0.19	-	0	1
Children: youngest 6-14 yrs	17,704	0.22	-	0	1
Children: youngest 15+ yrs	17,704	0.17	-	0	1
Age: 12-24 yrs	17,704	0.21	-	0	1
Age: 25-39 yrs	17,704	0.36	-	0	1
Age: 40-54 yrs	17,704	0.22	-	0	1
Age: 55-69 yrs	17,704	0.16	-	0	1
Age: 70+ yrs	17,704	0.06	-	0	1
Wave	17,704	3.05	1.78	0	6

[2] Unfortunately, as a result of coding differences, we were unable to make a full-time/ part-time distinction for each year of measurement.

Analytical Strategy

We used logistic regressions to analyze the determinants of volunteer work participation. The first model we employ includes the main effects; the second model additionally includes the year of measurement and interactions between the determinants and year of measurement, to be able to examine possible changes. To facilitate easy interpretation, we plotted predicted probabilities of volunteering for several groups in three graphs (Figures 6.1 to 6.3). These predicted probabilities give an overview of the likelihood of volunteering for different groups, and how this changed through the years.

The time invested in volunteering within the subsample of volunteers was analyzed with a (OLS estimated) linear regression model. We are aware of the fact that the non-randomness of missing cases in this analysis and the skewness of the distribution violate the assumptions of OLS regression. However, after running several alternative models,[3] we are assured that our results are not biased because of these violations. The dependent variable is the time spent on volunteering (hours) in the survey week.

6.5 Results: Participation in Volunteering

As expected, we found a positive and significant effect of church attendance on volunteering (Table 6.2). To give an impression of effect size we can calculate the standardized effect. The standard deviation of church attendance was 19.1 (yearly church visits; see Table 6.1). A difference of one standard deviation in church attendance therefore corresponds to 1.6 times ($e^{(0.025 * 19.1)}$) higher odds of volunteering, which is a strong effect.

[3] Since our analyses of the duration of volunteering are based on a subsample of volunteers instead of the entire sample, sample selection bias may be an issue, and a way to deal with this is by using sample-selection or Heckman selection models (DeMaris, 2004). However, finding factors that predict the selection well but do not affect the dependent variable is often hard to do, and moreover, improper use of the models has been shown to lead to estimates that are farther away from the true population values (Bushway, Johnson, & Slocum, 2007; Stolzenberg & Relles, 1997). We experimented with these models (using church attendance and education in the selection but not in the duration equation; in accordance with our hypotheses), but decided to use the simpler two part model (Stolzenberg & Relles, 1997) instead. Our determinants seem to affect selection and duration quite differently and the correlation between the errors in the selection and duration equations (ρ) did not test significantly in any of the models, which means that selection bias is not a problem (DeMaris, 2004; Stata Corporation, 2005).
Additionally, we tried to assess the possible bias resulting from the skewness of the time variable. Both negative binomial regression and OLS regression with a log-transformed dependent variable showed similar results in terms of signs and significance of coefficients.

The findings for education corroborate previous studies: volunteering was more common among highly educated respondents (Table 6.2). The odds of volunteering of respondents with intermediate education were 1.50 ($e^{0.404}$) times higher than the odds of the lower educated. Similarly, the odds among those with a high education were 2.11 times higher ($e^{0.746}$).

Table 6.2
Logistic Regression of Participation (Unstandardized Coefficients)

	Model I	Model II
Church attendance	0.025**	0.019**
Education:		
- low (ref)	0	0
- intermediate	0.404**	0.479**
- high	0.746**	1.013**
Employment status:		
- studying	-0.007	-0.115
- employed (ref)	0	0
- homemaker	0.420**	-0.026
- unemployed/ disabled	0.504**	0.449**
- pensioner	0.624**	0.131
Women	-0.062	-0.050
Partner (ref = none)	0.053	0.039
Children in household:		
- none (ref)	0	0
- youngest child <5 yrs	0.158**	0.165**
- youngest child 6-14 yrs	0.414**	0.412**
- youngest child >15 yrs	0.107~	0.096~
Age:		
- 12-24 years (ref)	0	0
- 25-39 years	0.572**	0.593**
- 40-54 years	0.740**	0.806**
- 55-69 years	0.675**	0.711**
- 70+ years	0.296*	0.301*
Wave (x^{th} survey from 1975)		-0.104**
Interactions:		
- Church attendance x wave		0.002**
- Intermediate education x wave		-0.024
- High education x wave		-0.066*
- Studying x wave		0.037
- Homemaker x wave		0.150**
- Unemployed/ disabled x wave		0.016
- Pensioner x wave		0.148**
- Women x wave		0.006
Intercept	-2.472**	-2.016**
N	17,375	17,375
Pseudo R^2	.072	.077

*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed)*

Contrary to our expectations, the effect of having a partner was also non-significance. Separate analyses showed that it was "controlled out" by the effect of children; without the latter, the effect of having a partner was significant (b = 0.404; p = .000). The impact of children in the household was in accordance with previous studies. School-aged children encourage parental volunteering the most (b = 0.414; corresponding to 1.51 times greater odds than those without children). The difference between this group and those with very young children (<5 years) was also significant ($Chi^2[1] = 17.65$; p = .000), as was the difference with those with older children ($Chi^2[1] = 25.43$; p = .000).[4] Table 6.2 also shows some differentiation according to age. Controlled for employment status – the groups 40-54 years and 55-69 years had the greatest chances of volunteering (the difference between them was non-significant). Note that the people in the older groups, especially after 70, are obviously more often retired. This means that they often get a pensioner "bonus" in the model (which is substantial). The uncontrolled age differences (output not shown) confirmed this: respondents aged 55-69 years had the strongest inclination to volunteer (b = 0.914; p = .000), which was significantly more than those aged 40-54 and 70+ years (which did not differ significantly from each other). The greatest difference – either controlled or uncontrolled – is between people aged 12-24 years and the rest.

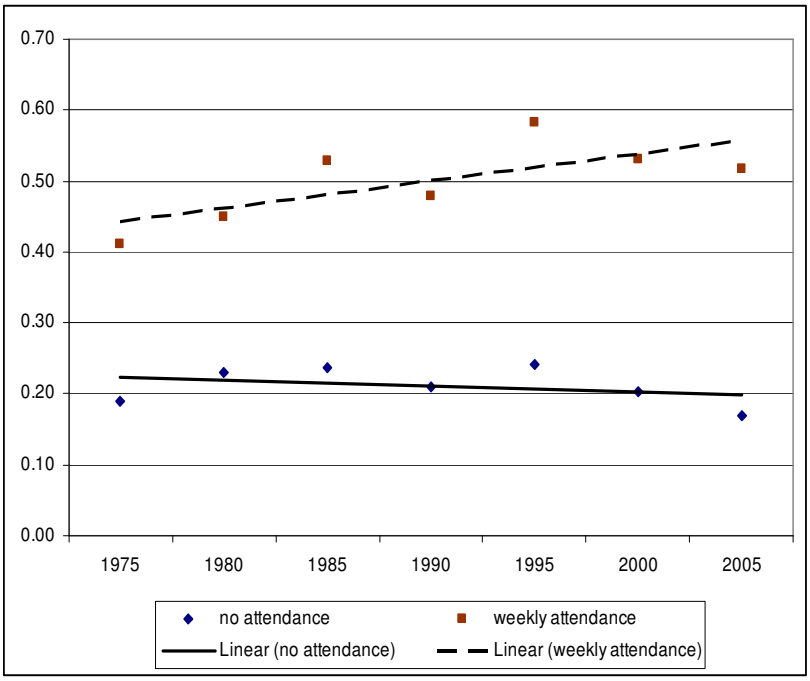
In model II of Table 6.2, interactions with the year of measurement were added for the determinants for which we expected change. The main effect of the year of measurement (without the interactions; not shown in the table) was negative (b = -0.041; p = .000), i.e., the number of volunteers declined between 1975 and 2005. The "main effects" in model II are the effects in 1975, since wave equals 0 in this year and therefore all interactions drop out of the equation. For instance, the difference between the lower and higher educated in 1975 was 1.013.

Table 6.2 shows several interaction effects, or changes in the determinants of volunteering. In line with our expectations, the effect of church attendance has gone up. Its estimated coefficient was 0.019 in 1975 and 0.031 (0.019+ 6 * 0.002) in 2005, which corresponds to a 66% increase in effect size. This means that the odds of volunteering of someone who visits church weekly compared to someone who never visits church have gone up from 2.7 ($e^{(0.019 * 52)}$) to 5.1 ($e^{(0.031 * 52)}$) in this 30 year period.

Figure 6.1 shows the trend graphically. The points in the graph are the predicted probabilities for the different groups in the different years. The lines are clearly diverging: the expected probability for churchgoers goes up, while the expected probability for non-churchgoers goes down. Although the developments are not perfectly linear the approximation of the linear interaction seems reasonable.

[4] We also tested whether the effect of children was different for men and women by including interaction effects. Only the one for school-aged children was significant. The effect for women turns out to be twice as strong, but the effect remains significant for men (b_{men}=0.248, p=.002; b_{women}=0.525, p=.000; reference group men without children).

Figure 6.1
Predicted Probability of Volunteering by Year and Church Attendance



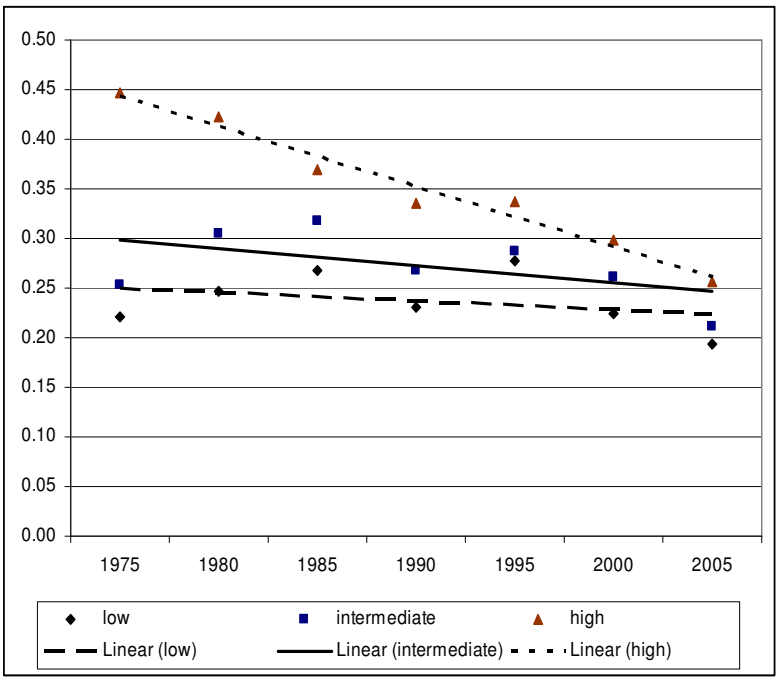
In an additional analysis, we omitted religious organizations from our dependent variable, to see whether the changes would be different for religious and secular volunteering. Without religious organizations, the effect of church attendance is still positive (b = 0.013; p = .000), but the interaction is no longer significant (b = .000; p = .508). In other words, voluntary work becomes more common among churchgoers, and this concerns activities in religious organizations.

The effect of education has also changed. Judging from the interaction effects in Table 6.2, the difference between the higher and lower educated decreased (b = -0.066). In 2005 the estimated difference between these groups was 0.617 (1.013 – 0.066 * 6), while it still was 1.013 in 1975. This means that a reduction in effect size occurred of roughly 40%, which is in line with the reasoning about the decreasing importance of education as a resource.[5]

[5] In an additional analysis, we checked whether the effect would disappear after more thorough age controls (dummy variables), since the lower educated contain more elderly in 2005 than in 1975. This hardly reduced the size of the interaction effect. Next, we omitted the category "volunteering and informal help to non-family members" from our dependent

Figure 6.2 displays the trends among the education groups graphically. The lines are clearly converging; although all groups showed declines, the line of the highly educated is the steepest, and the differences in the predicted probabilities has virtually disappeared in 2005.

Figure 6.2
Predicted Probability of Volunteering by Year and Education

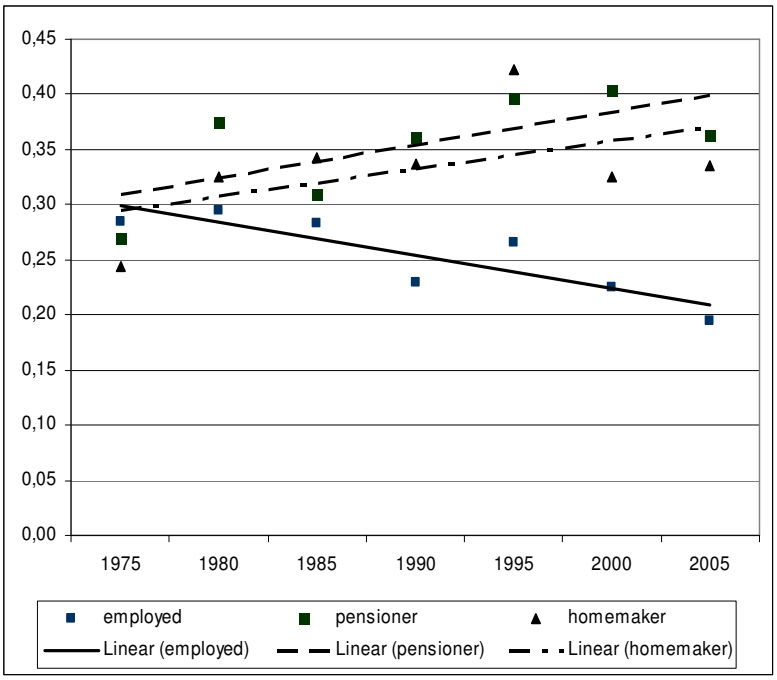


The role of employment status has changed also. Table 6.2 shows that the odds of volunteering of two groups increased (compared to the employed): homemakers and pensioners. Between 1975 and 2005, the situation changed from non-significant differences between the employed and non-employed (except students) to considerable more volunteering among homemakers and pensioners. The difference in 2005 between pensioners and the employed was 1.019 (0.131+ 6 * 0.148), corresponding to 2.77 ($e^{1.019}$) times higher odds of volunteering.

This information is also shown in Figure 6.3. Volunteering became more common among pensioners and homemakers, while it became less common among the employed.

variable (which represents somewhat easier voluntary work than the other parts). This also did not reduce the interaction effect.

Figure 6.3
Predicted Probability of Volunteering by Year and Employment



6.6 Results: Time Investment in Volunteering

Next, we turn to the time people invest in volunteering (average weekly hours), to see whether the changes found in the previous section also occurred here, and to see to what extent determinants of time investment are different from those of participation.

Table 6.3 shows one major change: judging from the significant interaction effects (model II), those with high and intermediate education have decreased their time investment compared to the lower educated. In 1975, those with intermediate and high educated spent roughly 1 and 1.5 hour per week more on volunteering than those with low education. However, those groups decreased their time investment every subsequent survey, which meant that by 1990 the differences had disappeared. In 2005, the situation is reversed: the lower educated invest more time in volunteering than the ones with intermediate and high education.

A second change, although only weakly significant, is the increase volunteering by pensioners. They already invested more time in volunteering than the employed in 1975, but by 2005 this difference had doubled.

Table 6.3
Regression of Time Investment (Unstandardized OLS Coefficients)

	Model I	Model II
Church attendance	0.004	0.008
Education:		*
- low (ref)	0	0
- intermediate	0.129	1.127**
- high	0.293	1.561**
Employment status:		
- studying	0.026	-0.415
- employed (ref)	0	0
- homemaker	0.991**	0.579
- unemployed/ disabled	2.693**	2.943**
- pensioner	2.230**	1.347*
Women	-1.038**	-0.821*
Partner (ref = none)	-0.111	-0.140
Children in household:		
- none (ref)	0	0
- youngest child <5 yrs	-0.871**	-0.844**
- youngest child 6-14 yrs	-0.576**	-0.554**
- youngest child >15 yrs	0.202	0.199
Age:		
- 12-24 years (ref)	0	0
- 25-39 years	0.443	0.490
- 40-54 years	0.681~	0.793*
- 55-69 years	0.473	0.561
- 70+ years	-0.872~	-0.818~
Wave (x^{th} survey from 1975)		0.225*
Interactions:		
- Church attendance x wave		-0.001
- Intermediate education x wave		-0.371**
- High education x wave		-0.433**
- Studying x wave		0.155
- Homemaker x wave		0.122
- Unemployed/ disabled x wave		-0.073
- Pensioner x wave		0.248~
- Women x wave		-0.060
Intercept	4.030**	3.189**
N	4,799	4,799
Adj. R^2	.058	.061

*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed)*

The determinants of time investment have not been subject to change as much as the determinants of participation; less interactions are significant. Time investment in general also did not change, there was a slight decrease in time investment in volunteering in the sample, but it tested non-significant (β = -0.032; p = .448; model not shown).

When we compare the effects in model I of Table 6.3 with those in Table 6.2, we can see how participation and time investment are differently determined. The differences are remarkable; only employment status and age showed a roughly similar pattern, while all the other effects are different. The economically inactive (except students) were more involved in volunteering than the employed: they volunteered more often, and when they did they invested more time in it. The magnitude of these effects is considerable: the unemployed and the pensioned invested approximately 2.5 hours per week more than the employed. Those in the youngest age group (12-24 years) are less involved in volunteering than other groups, although the differences in time investment are weakly significant at best.

We found no relation between church attendance and time investment in volunteering. Church-goers were more likely to volunteer (Table 6.2), but once they do, they do not invest more time than non-churchgoers.

There was also no main effect of education (model I), but as discussed, this was the result of contrasting differences in 1975 and 2005 (which level out in the pooled data).

Table 6.3 also shows that time investment is different according to gender: women spent less time (about one hour per week) on volunteering than men, which is in line with the idea that women generally have fewer resources for volunteering.

Parents of young children also invested less time than those without children, which is likely due to the time restrictions that come along with raising children. The results show a consistent pattern: young children (<5 years) are the largest restriction, this is slightly less the case for school-aged children, and when children get older the difference with people without children is non-significant. These findings are in line with previous studies; children generally encourage-yet-restrict volunteering by their parents. Additional analyses showed no interaction effects between being a parent and gender.

6.7 Discussion & Conclusions

Over the past decades important societal developments have occurred, such as educational expansion, changes on the job market, secularization, and changes in gender roles. Previous research has examined how these processes affected volunteering by looking at aggregate trends in participation. We tried to extent this research by looking at changes in the determinants of volunteering and found several changes. The direction of change is hard to predict from shifts in the size or composition of groups. Instead, it is more informative to look at changes in the character of a certain group or determinant.

The effect of church attendance on the decision to volunteer has increased considerably; its effect size went up by 66% between 1975 and 2005. In other words, the gap between frequent churchgoers and non-churchgoers has widened. We

found that this mainly concerned volunteering for religious organizations, which is intuitive: as church attendance declines fewer churchgoers are available to help out, and if religious organizations want to keep up their supply of voluntary services, a larger share will receive requests for participation. Additionally, the pressure to respond positively to these requests may have increased, as religious communities became smaller and denser.

The role of education in volunteering has also changed considerably. In 1975, volunteer work was the domain of the highly educated, whereas in 2005, the differences according to educational attainment had nearly vanished. Regarding time investment the positions switched: in 2005 the lower educated invested more time in volunteering than the higher educated. In line with previous research, part of the explanation for this could be that education as a resource is less important now than it was in the 1970s; holding a degree no longer corresponds automatically to a certain (privileged) social position. Furthermore, supply side changes in volunteering may explain this trend. Incidental volunteering usually involves less complicated tasks than more dedicated, long term volunteering. Additionally, if it is true that organizations are increasingly run by professional managers, they will start taking care of the most difficult tasks, leaving the easier work for volunteers.

The third important change we found was that volunteering is increasingly connected to economically inactive groups. Pensioners and homemakers have shown a substantial increase in their inclination to volunteer. Combined with the fact that they volunteer considerably more hours than other groups, this made them the champions of voluntary work in 2005. Furthermore, our results suggest that employment status is more important than age, as it explained the uncontrolled age differences to a large extent. However, as the two are inherently connected, this means that the population of volunteers is getting considerably older. A redistribution of resources seems to have taken place among the groups with different employment positions. The employed are faced with increased responsibilities and time pressure. Pensioners and older homemakers[6] have better health, skills and experience now than they did in 1975. Additionally, this stage in the life course is increasingly seen as a period of meaningful activity (cf. Moen & Fields, 2002), which may enhance the motivation to volunteer.

These results have implications for volunteering research. For example, they help explain why the sharp decrease in church attendance in the Netherlands after the second World War was not accompanied by a decrease in voluntary work (cf. Bekkers, 2004): along with the decrease in church attendance in the population the effect of church attendance on volunteering went up. Furthermore, changes in determinants also affect predictions of future volunteering (e.g., Einolf, 2009). In the

[6] Homemakers in households where the breadwinner is retired often still report being a homemaker instead of being retired as their employment position.

calculations of future levels of volunteering, the determinants of volunteering should not be treated as a constant; their changes should be extrapolated instead.

In addition to changes in determinants, we found that sociodemographic characteristics often relate differently to participation and time investment, and sometimes have opposite effects. Being a parent of young children is an example of the latter; children encourage parental volunteering (in schools and clubs), however, they simultaneously decrease the time invested in volunteering. The reason for this seems straightforward; taking care of children takes a lot of time that cannot be spend on other activities. From a supply side perspective, participation and time investment are logically connected: when a given production of voluntary work is required and participants can only contribute little (e.g., parents of young children), the help of many is needed to get things done. The effect of church attendance is also different: it strongly encourages participation, but has no effect on the time invested in volunteering. One would expect this result if one sees religious communities as networks of recruitment solely. However, if it is true that church attendance also stimulates pro-social values it is more remarkable; apparently these values then fail to bring about greater contributions to voluntary work. Unfortunately, our data did not contain attitude or motivation indicators. Therefore these explanations remain tentative.

A few additional limitations of our analyses should be discussed. First, our data did not specify which (type of) organization respondents volunteered for. This is unfortunate, as it may have provided us with additional information on how to interpret the trends. Second, the use of one-week diary data means that our sample contains relatively many frequent volunteers and less incidental volunteers. Our conclusions should therefore be read as concerning regular volunteering. This may also have substantive implications. E.g., our data showed a decrease in the number of people who volunteered in the week of the survey, which we interpreted as a decline in participation. An alternative explanation may be that volunteering became more sporadic; in that case, the total number of volunteers may have stayed the same, but the share of incidental volunteers went up at the expense of frequent volunteers.

Another point of critique may be that we treated participation and time investment as distinct choices while in reality there are not. This is certainly true; the amount of time invested is not fully variable. Volunteer work is likely to come as a package deal: either you perform a certain task (which comes with a certain fixed time investment) or you do not. This may also explain why we found a decline in volunteering with regard to participation, but not with time investment. However, although these choices may be related to a certain extent, our analyses showed that their determinants are quite different, which has practical implications for voluntary organizations. For example, it may be easier to persuade people with children to become involved if they can be assured that the required time investment will be limited. Similarly, as the elderly and economically inactive show an increased

inclination to volunteer, it may be fruitful for voluntary organizations to aim for those groups in their recruitment efforts when they need participants for time-consuming tasks. A good match between the jobs that need to be done and the characteristics of the volunteers that are available will make it easier for voluntary organizations to mobilize people.

7. Welfare State Expenditure and Inequalities in Voluntary Association Participation[1]

Abstract

Large gaps in associational involvement exist along education, income and gender lines and across different organizations. This paper examines the extent to which these gaps vary across countries. We argue that, next to the discussion about crowding out effects, it is important to look at conditioning effects of welfare states. Our analyses indicate that extensive welfare state expenditures reduce participatory inequalities. Furthermore, we find that the validity of the crowding out hypothesis is dependent on region; we found *crowding in* effects in Northern and Western Europe, while we see signs of *crowding out* outside this region. Our findings suggest that conditioning effects of welfare states deserve greater attention in research.

[1] A slightly different version of this chapter is currently under review. Co-author is Tom van der Meer.

7.1 Introduction

For a long time, voluntary associations have been connected to egalitarian democratic ideals by scientists, practitioners, and policymakers. According to Skocpol (1999), throughout the history of associational involvement in the US, "a person of lesser occupational status could work his or her way up an associational ladder all the way to the top" (p. 67), thereby offering opportunities for learning and self-development to everybody. These democratic ideals are based on two interrelated and hoped-for premises. The first premise is that associational involvement has beneficial side-effects, such as better health (Piliavin & Siegl, 2007), income (Baer, 2006), status attainment (Lin, 1999, 2001), or jobs (Ruiter, 2008). The second premise is that voluntary associations bring together many different social groups that would otherwise be less likely to meet each other. In other words, citizens from different social groups – like men and women, the rich and the poor, and the high and the low educated – should have equal opportunities to participate. If this is the case, we will refer to it as *participatory equality*.

Yet, despite the ideals of participatory equality, a good deal of empirical research shows that involvement in voluntary associations is selective with regard to many characteristics (Wilson, 2000): several *participatory inequalities* exists. According to Verba et al. (1995), decisions of becoming involved are dependent on three elements: motivation (or incentives), capacity (or resources), and networks. Differences in motivation are unproblematic: "If some citizens do not participate because they freely choose not to be active [...] then participatory inequalities do not compromise democracy" (Verba, et al., 1995, p. 26). However, participatory inequality that is induced by a lack of structural resources (like education and income) or ascribed characteristics (like gender) is a concern for the egalitarian, democratic ideal of voluntary associations. This is not induced by not wanting to participate, but by being unable to participate, due to a lack of resources. As a result, "a substantial gap ... separates the existing reality of inequality-reinforcing associations and a hoped-for politics of equality-enhancing association" (Fung, 2003, p. 524). Although individual differences in associational involvement have been well documented in previous research, the logical follow-up question has not been answered satisfactorily: how can participatory inequality be reduced? And preceding this question: in which cases are the inequalities large and in which cases are they small? In this paper, we try to answer these questions by looking at organizational and institutional context.

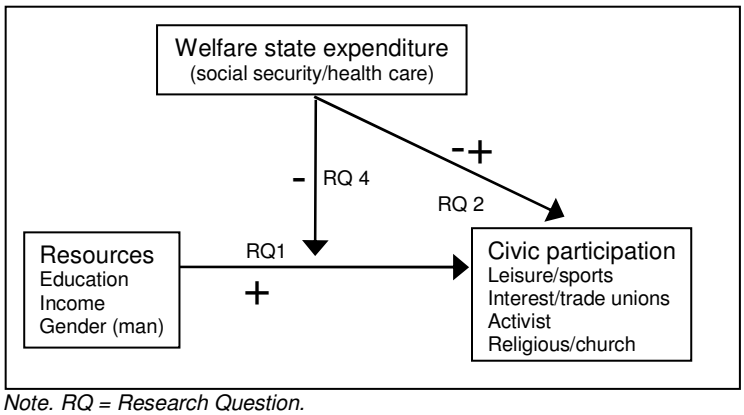
The resources perspective offers an interesting starting point for explaining the origins of participatory inequality (Schlozman, et al., 1999; Verba, et al., 1995; Wilson & Musick, 1998). At the micro level, lack of individual resources (like financial means, cognitive abilities, or social skills) functions as a constraint for citizens to participate. This causes participatory inequality between those with and those without the relevant resources. However, at the macro level, resources can be

redistributed. In particular, welfare state expenditures aim to redistribute individual level resources (by providing financial means, possibilities for childcare and parental leave, among others) from the haves to the have-nots. Consequently, individual level resources matter less, and participatory inequality should be lower in countries with high levels of welfare state expenditure.

This paper aims to explain participatory equality through an "analysis of individual-level behavior that is informed by and linked to aggregate-level, institutional, and policy developments" (Jacobs & Skocpol, 2005: 218), which means that we need to take into account individual, organizational, and institutional differences, and examine how they are interrelated. In the course of this paper we will answer four research questions (see Figure 7.1).

1. *To what extent do the effects of education, income, and gender differ across types of associations?*
2. *To what extent does welfare state expenditure affect the average level of associational involvement?*
3. *To what extent do the effects of education, income, and gender differ across countries?*
4. *To what extent does welfare state expenditure diminish participatory inequality across education, income and gender lines?*

Figure 7.1
General model



Note. RQ = Research Question.

Figure 7.1 summarizes our research model graphically. First, we examine the effects of education, income and gender on involvement in four types of associations: leisure, interest, activist, and religious organizations. The effect sizes reflect the degree of inequality for a certain individual characteristic in a certain association. Next, we test the influence of welfare state expenditure in two ways. To answer our second research question, we assess its direct influence on the average country level

involvement rate, also referred to as crowding *in* or crowding *out* effects. Methodologically, this implies the use of multi-level models, with random intercepts. To answer our third research question, we need to examine the variation in the individual determinants across countries. Methodologically, this additionally implies the use of models with random slopes. Finally, we answer our fourth question by examining the way in which welfare state expenditures affect education, income, and gender differences, which implies the use of cross-level interaction effects. All questions will be answered by analyses of two cross-national datasets (ESS 2002 and ISSP 2004), which enable us to assess robustness and generalizability.

7.2 Theory: The Resources Approach

People's capacities or resources are an important component of the theory that explains associational involvement. As they set the limitations of their possibilities, they partly explain why social groups have different chances to participate:

> "[...] the choice to take part in a particular way is a constrained one. Various forms of participation impose their own requirements – the time to volunteer in a campaign, the money to cover a check to a political cause, the verbal skills to compose a convincing letter. Thus, those who wish to take part also need the resources that provide the wherewithal to participate". (Verba, et al., 1995, p. 3)

This means that citizens with few resources have less means to meet the requirements of becoming and staying involved (Schlozman, et al., 1999; Verba, et al., 1995). Vice versa, citizens with abundant resources are more likely to participate. The arguments about resources provide a theoretical interpretation of the relationship between socioeconomic variables and participation (Verba, et al., 1995). We focus on three well-studied structural sources of inequality in associational involvement: education, income, and gender (e.g., Bekkers, 2005; Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Verba, et al., 1995). Strictly, when we refer to education, income, and gender, we mean the resources that are brought about by these three characteristics such as time, money, and social skills.

Educational attainment has been found to be "the most important resource promoting active citizenship" (Bekkers, 2005). All modes of associational involvement (i.e. membership, participation, volunteering and donation of money) rise with educational level (Gesthuizen, et al., 2008). Education provides citizens with several resources that are helpful in associational participation. Through education citizens obtain civic values and skills that promote associational involvement (Gesthuizen & Kraaykamp, 2002; Oesterle, et al., 2004). Moreover, the highly educated have larger social networks, and are therefore more likely to know members of associations (Bekkers, et al., 2007; McPherson, et al., 1992). Since

"being asked" is an important incentive to join an organization (Prouteau & Wolff, 2008), this further boosts participation within circles of highly educated people.

Income is one of the most clear-cut resources needed for associational involvement (e.g. Li, et al., 2003; Ruiter, 2008). Most voluntary associations have entry costs such as membership fees, or additional costs such as expenses for traveling, drinks, meals, or materials. This limits the poor in their possibilities of participating in such associations. Warr (2006) gives a qualitative account for the fact that women from socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods, with low incomes, hardly participate in voluntary associations. Lack of skills, time, money and the concern with their everyday problems kept them away from associational involvement and, in turn, they were severely restricted in their possibilities to improve their skills or to meet people with the resources "to get ahead".

A third relevant cleavage in associational involvement is gender. Men and women differ in the type and extent of their associational involvement. Overall, women are less likely to participate in voluntary associations, as they have fewer resources (Paxton, et al., 2007). Their social networks are different from men's in several ways (Lin, 2000): they are generally smaller and show larger proportions of kin and neighbors. Moreover, women generally take up time-consuming care tasks. Indeed, the resource of time is highly determined by "such life circumstances as having a job, a spouse who works, or children, especially preschool children" (Schlozman, et al., 1999, p. 433).[1] As a result, women participate less in voluntary associations in general. Yet, the sex difference does not apply to all types of associations similarly. Women are less likely to participate in leisure and interest organizations, whereas they are more likely to join activist organizations (Van der Meer & Van Ingen, 2009).

7.3 Hypotheses

The general effects of education, income, and gender on associational involvement are well-studied. We add to this knowledge in three ways. First, we formulate a hypothesis on how these effects differ according to the type of voluntary association under study. Second, we theorize how associational involvement is affected by the level of welfare state expenditure and other country characteristics. Third, we develop hypotheses about how the effects of education, income, and gender are conditioned by welfare state expenditure.

[1] On the other hand, when women have children this does not necessarily mean that their voluntary participation is endangered; in fact, school-age children can have an effective positive influence, especially for women who are not working (Rotolo & Wilson, 2007).

Types of Organizations

As the resources that are required to participate differ from association to association (Verba, et al., 1995), participatory inequality is also likely to differ across types of associations (Curtis, et al., 1992; Schlozman, et al., 1999; Verba, et al., 1995). In particular, the overrepresentation of the affluent, well-educated, and male participants in politics and political organizations is well-documented (Schlozman, et al., 1999). Consequently, we expect strong participatory inequality within politicized organizations like interest organizations (that defend their members' interests, e.g. trade unions and consumer organizations) and activist organizations (that promote societal values, e.g. humanitarian or environmental organizations).

On the other hand, leisure associations may be the kind of organizations that citizens join in a more equal fashion. Analyzing voluntary associations in Flanders, Coffé and Geys (2007a, 2007b) found that hobby clubs and arts activities are among the most equal kind of associations in terms of background characteristics. Similarly, sports are often thought of as a domain in which people with different social backgrounds interact. Studies in different countries have indicated that broad segments of society participate in sports, and that the percentage of participants is still rising, although certain cleavages subsist (Breedveld, 2003; Scheerder, Vanreusel, & Taks, 2005; Wilson, 2002).[2]

Similarly, participatory inequality may be smaller in religious organizations than in other organizations (Schlozman, et al., 1999; Wuthnow, 2002). Especially in the United States, religion and voluntary associations have been intertwined, and this is seen as a strong equalizing force (Lipset, 1996). No minimum education or large financial donations are required to attend church. Similarly, there is no reason to expect a gender gap. Women often show the same or a higher level of church involvement than men (Stolzenberg, Blair-Loy, & Waite, 1995). However, our focus is on *active* involvement in associations, which may be more dependent on resources than "ordinary membership" as the performed activities will be more complicated and will generally require more responsibility. "Actual participation in religious activities [...] rather than mere stated affiliation, is even more clearly voluntary action" (Smith, 1975, p. 249) and in performing organizational tasks, resources of income and education will also prove to be helpful. The latter was empirically confirmed in research by Stolzenberg et al. (1995).

Based on the abovementioned research, we formulate the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: The effects of education, income, and gender on associational involvement are stronger for interest and activist organizations than for leisure and religious organizations.

[2] Throughout this paper we analyze *types* of organizations. We are aware that our analyses on types of organizations does not account for segmentation within these types, but our data do not allow a more concise operationalization (asking about types of associations is the common way of surveying voluntary association participation in cross-national studies).

Contextual Effects on Average Participation Rates

Over the past decades, scholars have examined the impact of welfare state expenditure and other country characteristics on average involvement rates across countries, which show large variations (Curtis, et al., 2001; Curtis, et al., 1992; Dekker & Van den Broek, 1998; Pichler & Wallace, 2007; Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001). Research on the relationship between welfare state expenditure and associational involvement has been guided by the crowding out hypothesis (Van Oorschot & Arts, 2005). Inspired by De Tocqueville (2000 [1835]), the voluntary sector and the state are considered to be competitors in the delivery of social services. Supposedly, welfare state expenditure takes away some functions of voluntary associations, most notably their function as an economic safety net through the traditional *charitas*. As their (economic) needs are already (partly) satisfied by state arrangements, citizens have less incentives for voluntary action (Van Oorschot & Arts, 2005). However, evidence for this proposition is mixed at best (Gesthuizen, et al., 2008; Salamon & Sokolowski, 2001; Scheepers & Te Grotenhuis, 2005). Others have argued that government expenditures complement voluntary action, for instance because voluntary organizations depend on government funds (Day & Devlin, 1996). Empirically, there is evidence for this *crowding in* effect (e.g., Rothstein, 2001; Salamon & Sokolowski, 2001).

The extent of welfare state expenditure is strongly related to other country characteristics. Economic development, for example, has been found to be an important determinant of participation rates (Curtis, et al., 2001). Well-developed countries are characterized by well-developed infrastructures, and high levels of income and education. As a result, an extensive "supply side" of associations emerges, which makes it easier to become involved for the ones who did not participate yet. Furthermore, the length of democratic rule stimulates associational involvement (Curtis, et al., 2001; Parboteeah, Cullen, & Lim, 2004); large differences have been found in participation rates between countries with long democratic traditions (North-Western Europe) on the one hand, and the young democracies of Southern Europe (the former authoritarian regimes) and Eastern Europe (the former communist regimes) on the other (Pichler & Wallace, 2007). To deal with state repression and insecurity, citizens of authoritarian and communist states often refrained from civic participation (Howard, 2003; Völker & Flap, 2001), and "compartmentalized their lives into small social networks made up of people whom they knew well" (Uslaner & Badescu, 2003).

Judging from this brief overview, we conclude that the influence of the welfare state expenditure needs to be assessed next to other country characteristics, and that the theoretical and empirical support for crowding out is ambiguous. We formulate two competing hypotheses.

Hypothesis 2a: In states with high levels of welfare state expenditure, citizens are less likely to be involved in associational life (controlled for confounding factors).

Hypothesis 2b: In states with high levels of welfare state expenditure, citizens are more likely to be involved in associational life (controlled for confounding factors).

Moderating Participatory Inequality: Resource Redistribution

There are indications that the degree of participatory inequality differs cross-nationally (Bartowski & Jasinka-Kania, 2004; Van Oorschot & Finsveen, in press). This opens up the possibility that certain macro factors affect these gaps. We argue that welfare state expenditure reduces participatory inequalities in two ways.

First, welfare states redistribute individual level resources from the haves to the have-nots, for example by providing social benefits and specific subsidies for the poor and the unemployed. Resource redistribution elevates the possibilities of becoming involved for the less privileged, and hence reduces participatory inequality. Governments can also aim directly for this reduction, by subsidies on membership for the poor. Second, generous welfare states (i.e. with high levels of social security) offer collective resources like subsidies to public facilities and organizations (i.e. health care, voluntary associations). The availability of these collective resources diminishes the importance of individual level resources. If high quality (public) education is provided by the state, the entire population will benefit, but the lower educated have most to gain. When many people obtain the civic skills that promote associational involvement through education, this reduces individual differences; educational attainment will be less distinctive as a resource. Hence, participatory inequality between those with individual resources and those without should be reduced.

Welfare state expenditure can also enhance the possibilities for women in associational life by redistributing care and household tasks. Gender gaps in associational involvement can be partly attributed to "large-scale social structures, which enhance or limit women's opportunities for education and employment" (Paxton, et al., 2007). For instance child care, maternity leave, and positive discrimination on the job market (Esping-Andersen, 1999) are ways in which states with high levels of social security redistribute care tasks and jobs (Geist, 2005) and may thereby reduce participatory inequality.

In short, we expect that welfare state expenditures have a tempering effect on the three inequality gaps under research.

Hypothesis 3a: In states with high welfare state expenditure, the effect of education on associational involvement will be smaller.

Hypothesis 3b: In states with high welfare state expenditure, the effect of income on associational involvement will be smaller.

Hypothesis 3c: In states with high welfare state expenditure, the effect of gender on associational involvement will be smaller.

7.4 Data and Methods

In this study we test our hypotheses on two cross-national data sets that supplement each other. First, we analyze the European Social Survey (ESS) 2002, for which data collection has been very tight and uniform, in a rather homogeneous set of countries (i.e. Western and Central European countries).[3] Moreover, the ESS includes a lengthy and detailed set of variables on associational involvement, and enables a detailed, informative and robust analysis. However, due to the relatively small and homogeneous set of European countries, the ESS does not allow us to generalize our findings to societies outside Western and Central Europe.

To assess the external validity and the robustness of our findings, we will subsequently test our hypotheses on the 2004 Citizenship Survey of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) (GESIS, 2004). The dataset covers 38 countries from all continents[4], which allows us to test whether our findings can be generalized outside Western Europe as well. Furthermore, although most key individual level variables in the ISSP (associational involvement, income, education) are less informative than those of the ESS, this allows us to test the robustness of our previous findings. To distinguish between differences resulting from measurement dissimilarities and those resulting from a larger country sample, we analyze a subsample of the ISSP that resembles the countries in the ESS next to the full sample.

Dependent Variables: Associational Involvement

The ESS contains questions on types of involvement and types of organizations. Based on previous studies (Lelieveldt, Astudillo, & Stevenson, 2007; Maloney & Rossteutscher, 2007) we reduced nine *types of voluntary associations* to four: leisure organizations (sports, cultural, and social associations), interest organizations (trade unions, professional associations, and consumer organizations), activist organizations (humanitarian or environmental organizations) and religious organizations. We reduced the *types of involvement* (membership, donating money, active participation and volunteering) to single, hierarchical scales using Mokken scale analysis (Van der Meer & Van Ingen, 2009; Verschuren, 2003), ranging from 0 to 4.

[3] We analyze 16 countries: Austria, Belgium, Germany (split into East and West), Denmark, Spain, France, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, and Slovenia.

[4] Australia, Germany (split into East and West), Great Britain, United States, Austria, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Poland, Bulgaria, Russia, New Zealand, Canada, Philippines, Israel, Japan, Spain, Latvia, Slovak Republic, France, Cyprus, Portugal, Chile, Denmark, Switzerland, Belgium (Flanders), Brazil, Venezuela, Finland, Mexico, Taiwan, South Africa, South Korea, and Uruguay.

In the ISSP dataset we distinguish between: (i) a sports, leisure, or cultural group, (ii) a trade union, business, or professional organization, and (iii) a church, or other religious organization. The types of association resemble the leisure, interest and religious organizations of the ESS respectively, although they are not entirely identical.[5] We only focus on active participation in these organizations, and leave out the aspect of belonging.[6] The responses were recoded into dichotomous variables reflecting active participation within the association.

Individual Level Determinants: Education, Income and Gender

In the design of the survey of the ESS, answering categories were implemented that are uniform for the different countries. *Education* was measured by the level of education (on a 5-point scale). *Income* is measured as the actual amount of money available to the household (i.e. net income), ranked into 12 groups. Finally, *gender* is a dummy variable with men as the reference category. Cases with missing values on income or education were removed from the analyses.

In the ISSP, *education* is measured as years of education. The measurement of *income* is somewhat problematic. We could not compare the income variable cross-nationally for several reasons: the monetary unit differs, the standard price level (i.e. the effective height of the income) differs, and the time span in which the income was gathered (i.e. monthly versus annually) differs between countries. To cope with these problems, we standardized income on the country means. This way, we measure relative differences in the income distribution within countries. Finally, *gender* is a dummy variable with men as reference category. Cases with missing values on income or education were removed from the analyses.

Welfare State Expenditure

As a proxy for welfare state expenditure, we used IMF-statistics on social security and health expenditure from the annual Government Finance Statistics (International Monetary Fund, 2002-2005) of the year before the ESS/ISSP survey. We standardized the expenditures for health and social security as a percentage of the GDP. The IMF-measure correlates strongly (>0.9) with both OECD and ILO data.

[5] Notably, the ESS focuses on religious organizations only, whereas the ISSP explicitly refers to involvement in both churches and religious organizations at the same time.

[6] The theoretical meaning of belonging to an association without participating actively is rather unclear, especially with regard to political parties and churches/religious organizations. In most countries belonging to a political party means being a paying member, but in the United States, for instance, it reflects being registered as an adherent of a party. For churches, the 'belonging' question is even more unclear: does it strictly reflect membership of an actual church, or also a more spiritual or legal sense of belonging to a broad religious tradition? Moreover, in some countries membership in churches is more or less ascribed.

This measure suits our hypotheses on welfare state expenditure better than the typology of welfare state regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990). First, the continuous measure captures more country level variation than the typology would. Second, applying the historical typology of welfare state regimes would require an extension to countries outside North-Western Europe. Third, the limited number of countries (and corresponding degrees of freedom) in our dataset forces us to be very restrictive in adding country characteristics. In that respect, the typology requires at least three degrees of freedom, whereas the continuous measure requires only one. Nonetheless, we also included the length of democratic traditions and GDP in our models, to put welfare state expenditures somewhat into context.

Control Variables

Finally, we control our models for several individual and contextual characteristics that might explain inequality within and between countries. Both in the analyses of the ESS and in the ISSP we control for age (and age-squared to capture non-linear tendencies), marital status, work status (i.e. having a paid job), religious denomination and church attendance. At the contextual level, we control for two factors: years of democratic rule (topped off at 1920), and economic development (GDP/Capita).

Analytical Design

We assess the magnitude of participatory inequalities by looking at regression coefficients. If a strong effect of education on associational involvement occurs, this means that there is a large gap between the low and high educated in their levels of participation. These coefficients can be compared across countries; if the coefficient is larger in country X than in country Y, this implies that participatory inequality is greater in this country. Accordingly, the variation in these coefficients reflects the degree to which participatory inequalities are different across countries.

In order to simultaneously analyze individual, country, and cross-level interaction effects on our proportional and dichotomous dependent variables, we apply multilevel logistic regression (Snijders & Bosker, 1999), using the MLwin 2.0 package (Rasbash, Steele, Brown, & Prosser, 2004). For both the ESS and ISSP data we subsequently estimate (i) random intercept models (to test hypotheses 1 and 2), (ii) random slope models (as a prerequisite to test hypotheses 3a/b/c and to answer research question 3), and (iii) random slope models with cross-level interaction effects (to test hypothesis 3). All of the models use the 2nd order PQL procedure for linearization in the maximum likelihood estimation process (Rasbash, et al., 2004). In the random slope models, covariances between the slopes and between slopes and intercepts were simultaneously estimated. P-values for variance tests are halved, as recommended by Snijders & Bosker (1999).

7.5 Results: Focused Comparison of 16 European Countries

First, we analyze the results for the ESS-data. Table 7.1 displays the random intercept models, which consist of the effects of individual and contextual level determinants on associational involvement in each of the four types of organizations. We will refrain from discussing the level 1 control variables to save space.

Unconditioned Individual and Contextual Effects

In line with previous studies, education and income showed significant and positive effects on involvement in all four types of association. However, the effect of gender was mixed. Men were *more* likely to participate in leisure and interest organizations than women, but *less* likely to join activist organizations. Unfortunately, our data do not contain information to assess why women are more likely to join activist organizations.

Table 7.1 also shows that the effects differ in strength across types of association. According to hypothesis 1, the degree of participatory inequality should be stronger for interest and activist organizations than for leisure and religious organizations. We found that participatory inequality is lower in religious organizations: the effect sizes of education, gender, and income were lower than those in interest and activist organizations. However, the participatory inequalities hardly differed in strength between leisure, interest and activist organizations, and additional tests proved that these differences are not significant. Note that the position of men and women was reversed for activist organizations: women were overrepresented. All in all, while we found support for hypothesis 1 on religious organizations, it was falsified for leisure organizations (in which associational involvement was fairly unequal and similar to that in interest and activist organizations).

In hypothesis 2a and 2b, opposite expectations were formulated about the effect of welfare state expenditure on associational involvement. As Table 7.1 indicates, we found positive effects of social security for all types of organizations, but they only reached significance for interest and leisure organizations. We also report the $p<.10$ significance value here, as our analyses have very limited power in showing contextual effects. For example, if we look at the standardized effect of welfare state expenditure (SD = 0.039; see Table A7.1) on involvement in interest organizations, this is 0.172 (0.039*4.41), which is larger than the (standardized) effect of income. These results contradict the crowding out thesis (hypothesis 2a), and partly support the alternative explanation (hypothesis 2b). Economic development (measured as GDP/capita PPP) had a significant, positive effect on all four modes of participation, while the effect of democratic rule was not significant.

Table 7.1
ESS Random intercept models (multi-level logistic coefficients)

	Interest	Activist	Leisure	Religious
(Level 1)				
Intercept	-6.32**	-7.52**	-5.37**	-9.99**
Education	0.15**	0.26**	0.17**	0.12**
Income	0.06**	0.07**	0.08**	0.05**
Women	-0.37**	0.27**	-0.29**	0.02
Age	0.09**	0.03**	0.01**	-0.01*
Age squared (/100)	-0.08**	-0.02**	-0.01**	-0.01*
Marital Status (ref: married):				
- Separated	-0.18**	-0.05	0.14**	0.25**
- Divorced	0.01	0.04	0.01	-0.03
- Widowed	-0.28**	-0.09*	0.06	0.10*
- Unmarried	-0.00	0.00	0.03	-0.01
Employment status (ref: employed):				
- Pensioned	-0.45**	0.05	0.13**	-0.12**
- Unemployed	-0.52**	-0.22**	-0.46**	-0.23**
- Social Benefit	-0.54**	0.06	-0.10**	-0.15*
- Other income	-0.32**	0.46**	0.32**	0.10
Church Attendance	0.02**	0.11**	0.08**	0.64**
Denomination (ref: nonreligious)				
- Roman Catholic	-0.10**	-0.12**	0.04	1.05**
- Protestant	0.07**	0.00	0.10**	1.37**
- Christian Orthodox	-0.25**	-0.59**	-0.01	1.06**
- Other	-0.21**	-0.04	-0.27**	1.59**
Citizenship	0.45**	0.15 **	0.56**	0.45**
Children in household	0.09**	0.03	-0.08**	-0.03
Household size	-0.05**	-0.06**	0.02**	0.04**
Length of residence	0.00*	-0.03**	0.03**	0.02**
Urbanization	-0.02**	0.03**	-0.07**	-0.01
(Level 2)				
GDP/ capita	0.01**	0.02**	0.02**	0.03**
Years of Democracy	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.00
Welfare state expenditure	4.41**	2.56	3.18~	3.96

Note. Level1: N = approx. 21,700; Level 2: N =17.
*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

Variance in Participatory Inequality

Before we turn to the question whether the individual level effects of education, income and gender are weaker in countries with higher levels of welfare state expenditure, we need to answer the second research question and assess whether the effects differ significantly across countries. Table 7.2 elaborates on the previous table, in the sense that it allows the effects (B) of education, income, and gender to vary across countries (U) simultaneously.[7]

[7] These random slope models converged without problems for leisure, activist and religious organizations. However, the model for interest organizations only converged when several non-significant country level co-variances were set to 0.

Table 7.2
ESS Random slope models

		Interest	Activist	Leisure	Religious
Education	Effect size (B)	0.195**	0.307**	0.197**	0.113**
	Variance (U)	0.011**	0.016**	0.003**	0.003~
	95% Range[a]	-0.011 <B< 0.401	0.059 <B< 0.555	0.090 <B< 0.304	0.006 <B< 0.220
Income	Effect size (B)	0.081**	0.090**	0.089**	0.043**
	Variance (U)	0.004**	0.002**	0.002**	0.004**
	95% Range[a]	-0.043 <B< 0.205	0.002 <B< 0.178	0.001 <B< 0.177	-0.081<B < 0.167
Gender	Effect size (B)	-0.456**	0.239**	-0.377**	0.005
	Variance (U)	0.072**	0.010~	0.065**	0.035
	95% Range[a]	-0.982 <B< 0.070	0.043 <B< 0.435	-0.877 <B< 0.123	-0.362 <B< 0.372

Note. Level1: N = approx. 21,700; Level 2: N = 17. Models are controlled for: Age, Age squared, Marital Status, Employment status, Church Attendance, Denomination, Citizenship, Having children, Household Size, Length of Residence, Urbanization of the community, GDP/ capita, and Years of Democracy.
[a] Defined as the interval of Beta +- 1.96 SD.
*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

The variance estimates (U) in Table 7.2 shows that the effects of education, income, and gender varied significantly (across countries) for all types of organization except religious organizations. For religious organizations the effect of income varied significantly, but the others showed little variation. In other words, the gaps in religious involvement between men and women, and between the lower and higher educated are not significantly different across countries. To facilitate interpretation, Table 7.2 also shows the estimated ranges in which 95% of the national effects (country averages) are located under the assumption of normal distribution. They show that inequality is rather strong in some countries, while it is nearly lacking in others. Note that the inequality in religious organizations regarding gender can go both ways (-0.362 <B< 0.372), depending on the country. Both the significant variance estimates and the ranges of effect sizes imply that most participatory inequalities differ strongly across the seventeen countries under study. This urges the question what determines these differences in participatory inequality.

Cross-Level Interaction Effects

Table 7.3 is, in turn, an extension of the random slope models of Table 7.2, including all cross-level interaction effects simultaneously. The first block (Level 1) shows the main effects of the individual level characteristics under study (i.e., the effects of education, income and gender in a country with an average level of welfare state expenditure). The effect of welfare state expenditure (Level 2) is less straightforward since the interactions are added (we will not further discuss this).

The third block (Cross-level) shows whether the individual level effects differ significantly across countries with differing levels of welfare state expenditure.[8]

Table 7.3
ESS Random slope models with cross-level interaction effects (multi-level logistic coefficients)

	Interest	Activist	Leisure	Religious
(Level 1)				
Education	0.20**	0.30**	0.18**	0.11**
Income	0.06**	0.09**	0.08**	0.04**
Women	-0.46**	0.24**	-0.30**	0.01
(Level 2)				
Welfare state expenditure	10.57**	7.32~	8.19**	3.28
(Cross-level)				
Education* Social security exp	-2.28**	-1.65**	-0.57	0.18
Income* Social security exp	-0.71**	-0.45	-0.54**	-0.01
Women* Social security exp	4.60**	2.73**	3.62~	-0.83
(Slope variance)				
Education	0.007**	0.013**	0.002**	0.003~
Income	-	0.002**	0.001**	0.004**
Gender	0.059**	0.001	0.070**	0.035**

Note. Level1: N = approx. 21,700; Level 2: N = 17. Models are controlled for: Age, Age squared, Marital Status, Employment status, Church Attendance, Denomination, Citizenship, Having children, Household Size, Length of Residence, Urbanization of the community, GDP/ capita, and Years of Democracy.
*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

We expected that welfare state expenditures would reduce the effect of education on associational involvement (hypothesis 3a). As the cross-level interactions in Table 7.3 show, this was true for interest and activist organizations; the effect of education is less strong in extensive welfare states. In other words, welfare state expenditure reduces participatory inequality between the higher and the lower educated in interest and activist organizations. We illustrate this for activist organizations. The main effect of education is 0.30 – which is the effect of education in the average welfare state. In countries with 4%GDP less welfare state expenditure than average (which corresponds to one standard deviation), the effect of education on involvement in activist organizations is 0.37 (0.30 + -0.04 * -1.65). In countries with 4% more welfare state expenditure than the average, the effect of education is 0.23 (0.30 + 0.04 * 1.65). This supports hypothesis 3a for interest and activist

[8] As in Table 7.2, the model for interest organizations would not converge. The only way to make it converge was by not allowing the slope of income to vary across countries. This is a heavy constraint, which increases the risk of Type I errors (false positives), i.e. finding a significant effect where this is not the case. To cope with this issue, additional models were estimated in which each cross-level interaction was modelled separately. For these models no additional constraints needed to be set. The obtained results were similar to Table 3.

organizations. However, hypothesis 3a was not supported for leisure and religious organizations; the cross-level interactions were not significant.

Similarly, hypothesis 3b stated that welfare state expenditure reduces the effect of individuals' income on associational involvement. Table 7.3 shows that the positive effect of income is smaller in countries with more social security spending for leisure and interest organizations. In other words, participatory inequality across income groups is smaller in more generous welfare states. This supports hypothesis 3b for interest and leisure organizations. The hypothesis is not supported for activist or religious organizations; although the interactions were in the expected direction, they did not reach significance.

Finally, according to hypothesis 3c the relationship between gender and associational involvement should be weaker in extensive welfare states. Table 7.3 shows that the effect of gender interacts significantly with welfare state expenditure for leisure, interest and activist organizations. However, the interpretation of the effects is somewhat different than for education and income. In leisure and interest organizations women participate less than men in the average welfare state (respectively -0.30 and -0.46). In states with 4% more social expenditure these gender effects are weaker (respectively -0.16 and -0.28), i.e., participatory inequality is lower. This is in line with hypothesis 3c. In activist organizations, women are *more* likely to participate (+0.24) than men. This effect becomes even stronger in states with 4% more social expenditure (namely 0.34). In other words, welfare state expenditure is beneficial for the position of women, but increases participatory inequality in this case. This does not support hypothesis 3c. Again, there are no significant interactions for religious organizations.

7.6 Results: Expanding the Sample of Countries

Next, we turn to ISSP data, which contain a larger sample of countries (31 rather than 17) and not only cover Western and Northern Europe, but also countries from other parts of the world. However, measurement was less detailed than in the ESS for most of our variables. To be sure that the differences in findings are attributable to the larger sample instead of measurement issues, we show the full sample and a subset of countries similar to the ones in the ESS for the first analyses.

Unconditioned Individual and Contextual Effects

The results displayed in Table 7.4 are based on analyses that are similar to those of Table 7.1 and the findings regarding participatory inequality are roughly similar as well.

We found positive effects of education in all types of associations, regardless of the sample of countries under study. This also true for income, except for religious organizations, where the effect was not significant. As the distinction

between the full and ESS sample reveals, this is the result of the sample expansion. The effect of income was significant in the ESS sample (in conformity with Table 7.1) but not outside Western and Central Europe (Table A7.5 in the Appendix shows that the effect is no longer significant after adding Eastern European countries and further drops after adding Anglo-Saxon and other countries).[9] Furthermore, we found negative gender effects for interest and leisure organizations (consistent with Table 7.1), but there appeared to be little gender inequality in religious organizations (see Table A7.5).

Table 7.4
ISSP Random intercept models for interest, leisure, and religious organizations with different sets of countries (multi-level logistic coefficients)

	Interest		Leisure		Religious	
	Full sample (N = 31)	Set ESS (N = 14)	Full sample (N = 31)	Set ESS (N = 14)	Full sample (N = 31)	Set ESS (N = 14)
Fixed:						
Intercept	-6.816**	-7.555**	-2.189**	-2.808**	-7.843**	-8.203**
Education	0.076**	0.050**	0.066**	0.051**	0.027**	0.037**
Income	0.121**	0.077*	0.128**	0.149**	0.037	0.073*
Gender	-0.312**	-0.337**	-0.347**	-0.285**	0.086~	-0.034
GDP/ capita	0.039*	0.046*	0.023	0.060~	0.037	0.008
Years of Democracy	0.001	-0.005	0.015**	0.008	0.005	0.000
Welfare state expenditure	-0.023~	0.034	-0.010	0.057	-0.022	0.034
Random:						
Intercept (variance)	0.159**	0.096*	0.245**	0.251*	0.620**	0.112*

Note. Level1: N = approx. 28,000; Level 2: N = 31. All models are controlled for age, age-squared, marital status, being employed, church attendance, denomination.
*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

In hypothesis 1 we stated that participatory inequality should be smaller in leisure and religious organizations than in interest organizations. In line with our previous findings, this is confirmed for religious organizations, but not for leisure associations.

Turning to the effects of welfare state expenditure in Table 7.4 (we will not discuss the control variables), we see interesting differences between the ESS and ISSP sample. Although virtually none of the effects are significant, the signs are the opposites of the other sample. It appears that the validity of hypotheses 2a and 2b is dependent on the region under study. In Western and Northern Europe, the influence of welfare state expenditure is lacking or positive (crowding in; see Table 7.1), refuting hypothesis 2a, and partly confirming hypothesis 2b. In countries outside

[9] In an additional analysis, we ran our models on non-ESS countries only, and we came up with the conclusion that is already implied by Tables 7.4 and A7.4: outside Northern and Western Europe, there is no effect of income on religious participation (b=0.017; SE=0.031).

Europe, the opposite seems to be the case: welfare state expenditure and associational involvement seem to either substitute each other (crowding out), or the relationship is non-existent (see also Tables A7.3 to A7.5 in the Appendix).[10]

Variance in Participatory Inequality

Next, we analyzed models with random slopes. Effect sizes vary strongly across countries; the 95% ranges that are displayed in Table 7.5 are somewhat broader than in the ESS data. Again, the distributions mainly ranged from no effect to a strong effect (either negative or positive). Effects range from negative to positive, e.g., women are overrepresented in religious organizations in most countries, but underrepresented in others. The size of the coefficients cannot be compared across the independent variables; they have different scales.

Table 7.5
ISSP Random slope models

		Interest	Leisure	Religious
Education	Beta:	0.294	0.323	0.130
	Variance:	0.053**	0.018**	0.010
	95% Range[a]:	-0.156 <B< 0.744	0.059 <B< 0.588	-0.065 <B< 0.326
Income	Beta:	0.107	0.104	-0.137
	Variance:	0.002~	0.010~	0.021
	95% Range[a]:	0.019 <B< 0.194	-0.088 <B< 0.296	-0.419 <B< 0.145
Gender	Beta:	-0.343	-0.452	0.309
	Variance:	0.020	0.091*	0.076
	95% Range[a]:	-0.619 <B<-0.066	-1.043 <B< 0.140	-0.232 <B< 0.849

Note. Models are controlled for: Gender, Education (within country), Income (within country), Age, Age squared, Marital Status, Current employment, Church Attendance, Denomination, GDP/ capita, Years of Democracy, and Welfare state expenditure.
[a] Defined as the interval of Beta +- 1.96 SD.
*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

Cross-Level Interaction Effects

Finally, Table 7.6 shows the cross-level interactions between welfare state expenditure and the individual level characteristics in the ISSP data (we only discuss the interaction effects). The signs of the coefficients were similar to those of the ESS: the interaction effects are opposed to the main effects. In other words, when the influence of the welfare state is significant, it reduces participatory inequalities. However, fewer of these cross-level interactions reach significance than in the ESS. For interest organizations, all were significant (although the interaction effect with gender only at the p<.10 level),[11] which confirms hypotheses 3a to 3c for this type of

[10] In an additional analyses on non-ESS countries only we found a negative effect of welfare state expenditure for interest organizations (b=-0.044; SE=0.018). The effects for leisure and religious organizations did not reach significance.

[11] Without the control variable for work, the interaction between gender and welfare state expenditure was significant at the 5%-level. The interaction effect implies that the

association. For leisure organizations, only the participatory inequality between men and women was significantly reduced by welfare state expenditure. This confirms hypothesis 3c for leisure organizations and contradicts it for the others. Similar to our previous analyses, hypotheses 3a to 3c are not supported for religious organizations.

Table 7.6
ISSP Random intercept models with cross-level interaction effects (multi-level logistic coefficients)

	Interest	Leisure	Religious
(Level 1)			
Education	0.090**	0.086**	0.045**
Income	0.120**	0.144**	-0.059~
Women	-0.378**	-0.463**	0.244**
(Level 2)			
Welfare state expenditure	0.035	-0.001	-0.083**
(Cross-level)			
Education* Social security exp	-0.005**	-0.001	0.001
Income* Social security exp	-0.007*	0.001	0.002
Women* Social security exp	0.010~	0.013~	0.002
(Slope variance)			
Education	0.003*	0.002**	0.001*
Income	0.006	0.005	0.021*
Gender	0.004	0.081**	0.068*

Note. Level1: N = approx 27,000; Level 2: N = 31. Models are controlled for: Gender, Education (within country), Income (within country), Age, Age squared, Marital Status, Current employment, Church Attendance (except model religious participation), Denomination, Education (between country), GDP/ capita, Years of Democracy, and Welfare state expenditure.
*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

7.7 Summary and Discussion

In this article, we aimed to shift the focus of the discussion from explaining *average* participation rates to explaining *inequalities* in associational involvement. We tested new ideas about contextual effects on these inequalities, and came up with several interesting findings, which open up new research perspectives.

In general, our findings are in line with the argument that resources are an important condition in the decision to participate. Across all types of organizations, the greatest inequality in participation occurred between groups with different educational attainment. The gap between people with high and low incomes was also very persistent, but smaller than the one of education. The role of gender in participatory inequality is more ambiguous; a differentiation between types of

underrepresentation of women is less in countries with extensive social security arrangements. Partly, this is because they are more likely to employed in these countries.

associations is needed here: (compared to men,) women were less involved in interest and leisure organizations, more involved in activist organizations and similarly involved in religious organizations.

Involvement in religious organizations was the most equal kind of participation in our study. Membership of religious organizations hardly depends on resources and is distributed equally across the population. This may "trickle up" to active involvement in these organizations; the composition of the active participants and volunteers reflects the diverse recruitment base. The exceptional and independent position of religious organizations becomes even more marked when we look at government influence. No effects whatsoever were found of welfare state expenditure on involvement in religious organizations. This could be due to the fact that – in most countries – the church and the state have long been separate domains, without much mutual interference. On the other hand, it may also have to do with the fact that the level of participation is already very high. As a result, there remain fewer gaps to close. Contradicting previous empirical and anecdotal evidence, we found that leisure organizations do not have a particularly equal composition. On the contrary, the gaps of education, income, and gender are often as large as they are in other types of organizations.

Our analyses revealed that welfare state expenditures condition associational participation in several ways. Its influence on (average) participation rates was ambiguous. In many cases, no significant effects were found, but when they were significant, their direction was dependent on region. In line with previous studies (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2001; Scheepers, Te Grotenhuis, & Gelissen, 2002; Van Oorschot & Arts, 2005), we found that welfare state expenditures complement voluntary association participation (crowding in) in Western- and Central Europe. However, outside this region, welfare state expenditures are negatively related to associational involvement (crowding out). This implies that scholars should carefully consider the set of countries they are studying and moreover, it raises questions about underlying mechanisms that explain why crowding out occurs in some regions, while crowding in occurs in others. One such underlying (conditioning) factor may be economic development or modernization: welfare state expenditure might crowd out associational involvement up to a certain threshold (of prosperity), and crowd in thereafter. When welfare states develop, it seems likely that the first priorities concern basic needs, and that only in later stages support to voluntary organizations and encouragement of participation is added.

Subsequently, we tested the conditioning effect of welfare state expenditures on participatory inequalities. When countries redistribute resources from the haves to the have-nots and offer collective resources, the likelihood of associational involvement is improved for those who are most constrained in their choices: the lower educated, the poor and women. In our view, this mechanism is theoretically more plausible than the crowding in/out idea. We found confirmation for this mechanism in our analyses of activist, leisure, and particularly interest

organizations. However, welfare state expenditure strengthens the overrepresentation of women in activist organizations. Yet, this too is in line with the resource approach. Extensive welfare states provide more resources like time and money to women. This resource redistribution strengthens women's level of associational involvement: in leisure and interest organizations the disadvantage to their male counterparts is therefore diminished, while their edge in involvement in activist organizations is increased. Recently, Van Oorschot and Finsveen (in press) also suggested a possible relationship between (the expansion of) the welfare state and social capital inequality, but in contrast to the current study, they found no significant results. We believe this is due to lack of power; in their final descriptive analyses thirteen cases (countries) were divided over four groups, which means that only very strong effects would be detected.

In sum, this study strongly calls for future cross-national research on inequalities in associational involvement, which could follow different paths. First, the kind of data and analyses employed in this paper do not allow further elaboration about the mechanisms that connect welfare state expenditure to participatory inequality. Future in-depth studies may want to examine these mechanisms; for instance, it would be interesting to study the effects of initiatives on the national and municipal level that aim to directly alleviate constraints in associational participation, by subsidizing membership fees for the poor, among other measures. Second, while we focused on social security, there could be other circumstances that decrease participatory inequalities. For example, obligatory "service learning" in educational programs may provide students with the resources and experience to become or stay involved in later life. A third extension of the current study would be to look at other sources of inequality. For instance, the relationship between ethnicity and associational involvement has recently been put on the agenda (Gesthuizen, Van der Meer, & Scheepers, 2009; Letki, 2008; Putnam, 2007). Our data did not allow us to analyze this, due to the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities.

Finally, given the supposedly beneficial effects of associational involvement for the participants, this study implies that voluntary associations are not egalitarian organizations, but rather operate as organizations that reproduce social inequality (Gesthuizen, et al., 2009; Ruiter, 2008). Those citizens who need the benefits of associational involvement most are actually the least involved (Schlozman, et al., 1999). Conversely, privileged citizens – who do not need the benefits of associational involvement in the first place – show the highest membership rates and occupy the most important positions within associations. Although welfare state arrangements will not make these differences disappear, this study has shown that there are ways to reduce participatory inequalities.

Part III: Effects of Voluntary Association Participation

8. Schools of Democracy? Disentangling the Relationship between Civic Participation and Political Action in 17 European Countries[1]

Abstract

The topic of this paper is the "schools of democracy" hypothesis, or the idea that involvement in voluntary associations stimulates political interest and action. Supposedly, having face-to-face contacts with fellow members induces civic mindedness – the propensity to think and care more about the wider world. Furthermore, civic skills and political efficacy should be enhanced, through involvement in collective activities, the organization of meetings, and cooperation and discussions with others. In turn, these enhanced civic skills and values should increase the chances of political activity among voluntary association members. These "neo-Tocquevillian" arguments were tested in cross-sectional, hierarchical analyses of seventeen European countries. We found positive correlations between associational involvement and political action, and these correlations were positive in all countries under study. However, more informative hypotheses were falsified. First, the correlation was stronger for interest and activist organizations than for leisure organizations. Second, passive members show much higher levels of political action than the non-involved, indicating selection effects. Additional effects of active participation in leisure organizations were marginal. Third, the correlation between associational involvement and political action was hardly explained by civic skills and civic mindedness. In sum, we found little evidence for a participation effect on political action, and concluded that the mechanism of political socialization plays a marginal role at best. Instead, our findings support the idea that selection effects account for a large part of the correlation between associational involvement and political action.

[1] A slightly different version of this chapter was published in the *European Journal of Political Research* (Van der Meer & Van Ingen, 2009). Tom van der Meer was co-author.

8.1 Introduction

Ever since the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville (De Tocqueville, 2000 [1835]), social scientists and political ideologists have presented participation in voluntary associations as an "all-purposive elixir for the ills of society" (Uslaner & Dekker, 2001). When people get involved in voluntary associations there are all kinds of benefits for the participants themselves and for society as a whole (Rosenblum, 1998; Stolle & Hooghe, 2003). Several of these effects have been examined in the past, such as trust (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Claibourn & Martin, 2000; Jennings & Stoker, 2004), physical and mental health (Wilson, 2000), democratic values (Flanagan, et al., 1998; Hooghe, 2003b), generosity (Brooks, 2005), income in later life (Baer, 2006), and status attainment (Lin, 1999, 2001). In political science, great attention has been paid to the positive effects of civic participation on political activity (Bowler, et al., 2003; McFarland & Thomas, 2006; Putnam, 1993).

From the neo-Tocquevillian perspective, voluntary associations are claimed to have internal political functions (Newton, 1999; Warren, 2001), or act as "schools of democracy" (De Tocqueville, 2000 [1835]; Morales & Geurts, 2007). Participation in voluntary associations leads to a "social spiral" (Lichterman, 2005): citizens obtain the civic skills necessary for participation in a democracy, and build a broader and more varied social network. Moreover, civic participation makes people pro-social, trusting, and politically interested (Halpern, 2005). In the end, participants in voluntary associations are more likely to be politically active, as they have obtained the skills, the network and the mindset to be so. We consider this positive, causal relationship between civic participation and political action, through socialization, to be the core of the "neo-Tocquevillian" theory. Positive, small-scale experiences in associations enable people to socialize into larger political involvement.

Over the years, neo-Tocquevillians have laid down a set of interlocking claims on the social spiral thesis. Yet, the empirical foundation of the neo-Tocquevillian approach has not kept abreast with the extensive theoretical claims (Ayala, 2000). First, empirical support is mostly found in macro correlations, where "elaborate lists of civic activities and social practices are thrown together in a single amorphous grouping, which illuminates little about [social capital] and does even less to demonstrate how these activities and practices matter for the health of political democracy" (Boggs, 2001). Second, empirical evidence on the validity of the more specific claims is scarce and ambiguous. Several empirical analyses shed doubt on the validity of the neo-Tocquevillian theory, contesting the *socialization* effect in favor of a *selection* effect (Armingeon, 2007). According to the latter, certain personality traits stimulate citizens to join voluntary associations and engage in political activities at the same time, without a causal relation between the two. It is "self-evident that not everyone will have the same inclination to join voluntary associations" (Hooghe, 2003b). Citizens that are more pro-social, outgoing and assertive are more likely to undertake both civic and political activities.

Throughout this paper, we strictly aim to test the (neo-Tocquevillian) socialization thesis, yet we keep the selection thesis in the back of our minds as a viable alternative. What is needed to advance the debate is a more thorough empirical examination of neo-Tocquevillian theory, thereby filling the gap between the theoretical claims and their empirical foundation. We will dissect the neo-Tocquevillian literature and derive five empirical claims from it.

1. *There is a strong, positive relationship between civic participation and political action.*
2. *The strength of this relationship differs according to the type of voluntary association: leisure organizations are more important than interest and activist organizations.*
3. *The relationship is universal for all (Western) democratic societies.*
4. *The strength of this relationship differs according to the extent of involvement.*
5. *The relationship is explained by a socialization mechanism, that is, associational involvement increases civic skills and civic-mindedness, which in turn stimulate political action.*

We contribute to the literature in three ways. First, we present an overview of previous research on neo-Tocquevillian theory. Second, we derive five empirical claims, making the theory more "testable". Third, we test these claims on a detailed cross-sectional dataset, which provides us with more nuanced insights in the nature of the relationship between civic participation and political action.

In the next section we will formulate the neo-Tocquevillian approach in general terms. Then, we will elaborate on the five neo-Tocquevillian claims in the subsequent sections, both theoretically and empirically.

8.2 The neo-Tocquevillian Approach

The idea of a positive relationship between civic and political participation is both attractive and old. A properly functioning democracy needs competent and involved citizens. Both qualities are supposedly encouraged by "associational experiences" in small scale environments, such as clubs and voluntary organizations. If the link between civic and political engagement worked, it would be an easy road to more political involvement and more vibrant democracies. Voluntary associations would be a stepping stone to political action.

The idea that voluntary associations stimulate their members' political action is the common denominator of the studies we will henceforth label as the neo-Tocquevillian approach. Evidently, this literature is far less homogeneous and far more elaborate than the basic idea suggests. The following paragraphs will do more justice to this diversity. However, the essence of the approach, named after its first propagist, Alexis de Tocqueville, is the "schools of democracy" idea. Studying the

19th century American democracy, De Tocqueville (2000 [1835]) concluded that voluntary associations kept the excesses of individualism at bay:

> Sentiments and ideas renew themselves, the heart is enlarged, and the human spirit is developed only by the reciprocal action of men upon one another. I have shown that this action is almost nonexistent in a democratic country. It is therefore necessary to create it artificially there. And this is what associations alone can do. (p. 491)

A neo-Tocquevillian line of reasoning was firmly established when Almond and Verba (1965) comparatively studied the importance of the "civic community" as a determinant of political attitudes and behaviour. Attention to voluntary associations was renewed after publications by Putnam (1993, 2000), who claimed that voluntary associations are crucial in the functioning of participatory democracies.

Voluntary associations, in the neo-Tocquevillian line of reasoning, are small scale learning environments (Van Deth, 1997), in which people gain experience in dealing with dissimilar others and with contributing to a common good. When people associate with others, they learn to cooperate, discuss, organize and trust. In civic associations members obtain the abilities (civic skills) and the urge (civic-mindedness) they need in order to participate in politics (Lichterman, 2005). Civic participation would be most beneficial when involvement is active, when participants have face-to-face contact, and the organizations are horizontally structured (cf. Selle & Stromsnes, 2001).

Although this argument has been found in political science for a long time, it is not obvious that it is valid. There are encouraging (e.g., McFarland & Thomas, 2006), discouraging (Van Deth, 2000), and mixed findings (e.g., Sobieraj & White, 2004) on the extent to which civic participation stimulates political action. Some studies even conclude that voluntary association participation sometimes encourages turning away from politics (Eliasoph, 1998; Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2005). Moreover, there may be negative outcomes to involvement in certain types of associations, notably isolationist and hate groups, the so-called "dark side of social capital" (Portes, 1998). On the whole, voluntary associations seem unable to meet theoretical expectations empirically (Dekker, 2004).

In sum, what is needed is a clear specification of hypotheses from the theoretical, neo-Tocquevillian work, and thorough empirical tests to see whether these ideas are valid. Lack of sufficiently detailed measures is probably the main reason why such a dissection has not yet been done. However, recently, new datasets have been released that make such an investigation of the schools of democracy thesis possible.

8.3 Data and Measurement

As the stepping stone thesis is at its core an individual level explanation (that is, the mechanism takes place between citizens), we opt to use survey data to test it. The theoretical claims put a high demand on the quality of our dataset, which is met by the first wave of the European Social Survey (ESS), collected in 2002 and 2003. The ESS presents high quality data: it has a mean response rate of over 70 per cent and the data collection has been tight and uniform, based on strict procedures of sampling, questioning and coding.

Our dataset includes 17 countries: 13 Western European countries (Austria, Belgium, West-Germany, Denmark, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden), and four former communist countries (East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia). Luxembourg is left out of the analysis, as the country is an outlier on several of the independent variables (most notably on respondents" citizenship). Furthermore, due to measurement issues, we had to exclude Finland, Israel and Italy (see below). Our dataset contains a total of 28,439 respondents aged 18 years and older. To a large extent these seventeen societies are similar on general cultural and political characteristics, as they are all European liberal democracies and predominantly Christian.

An important caveat of this study is our inability to draw conclusions on the causal direction between civic participation and political action. Neo-Tocquevillian theory puts forward a clear sequence: civic participation causes political action. However, as we lack longitudinal, comparative panel data, we can at best test this claim indirectly, that is, by combining cross-sectional data with theoretical reasoning. When we speak in causal terms about our findings, this is – strictly speaking – only in statistical terms: we consistently introduce measures of civic participation as determinants of political action in our multilevel regression models.

Civic Participation

The ESS dataset addresses twelve types of voluntary associations (ranging from sports clubs to environmental organizations) and four modes of involvement (membership, active participation, volunteering and donation of money). To cope with this overload of information, data reduction is needed. We distinguish three types of associations based on their primary purpose: leisure organizations, interest organizations, and activist organizations (Van der Meer, 2007).[1] Leisure

[1] From the twelve types of voluntary associations we leave out political parties and religious/church organizations. We leave out participation in political parties as it overlaps with both civic and political participation. Participation in religious and church organisations is left out for several reasons. First, 'church membership (…) may be somewhat less "voluntary" than other types of association involvement' (Curtis, et al., 1992). Second, the exact meaning of religious and church organizations is unclear: do they only encompass church related groups like Christian youth organizations, or also church membership in

organizations consist of sports, cultural and social associations. Interest organizations consist of trade unions, professional/business and consumer organizations. Finally, activist organizations consist of environmental and humanitarian/peace organizations. For each type of organization we construct four dichotomized variables (cf. Curtis, et al., 1992; Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006). We examine whether each respondent (i) was a member of, (ii) participated actively in, (iii) volunteered for, and (iv) donated money to at least one such voluntary association. Based on these variables, we construct metric scales of civic participation (one for each type of association). Mokken scale analysis showed that the four modes of civic participation are hierarchically related. As the scalability coefficient H is 0.58 for leisure organizations, 0.60 for interest organizations, and 0.40 for activist organizations, all three scales can be classified as strong. However, the scales do not hold up in Italy, Israel and Finland, where – likely due to measurement errors (Van der Meer, 2007) – only a fraction of the respondents report more than one mode of participation per type of association. We therefore left these countries out of the analysis.

The resulting scales of civic participation (separately for leisure, interest and activist organizations) range from 0 to 4. The score of 0 represents no civic participation; the score of 4 represents the most intense form of civic participation.

Political Action

Political participation is defined as "legal activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take". The distinction between conventional and unconventional political participation is "one of the most common classifications of political participation" (Sabucedo & Arce, 1991). Conventional political participation aims to influence the political process in a system of representation through the electoral process (Verba & Nie, 1972). Unconventional political participation aims to influence the political process from the outside, for instance by holding a demonstration or boycotting products.

Conventional political action includes four activities: contacting a politician; working for a political party; wearing a campaign badge or sticker; and donating money to a political organization. Unconventional political action contains: lawful demonstration, product boycott, signing a petition, buying products for political

general? Third, related to the previous comments, there is a country specific bias in the registration of church members (Van Oorschot, et al., 2006), as some countries have a tradition of registration of citizens as church members. We exclude church and religious organizations from our analysis to do right to the neo-Tocquevillian argument. However, this does not mean that they cannot function as schools of democracy.

reasons, and illegal protests. Both measures of political action are dichotomized into doing at least one activity or not. [2]

Background Characteristics

Bivariate analyses of the neo-Tocquevillian approach run the risk of erroneous conclusions. A bivariate association between civic participation and political action might be explained by selection effects: people with socio-economic resources or pro-social dispositions might be civic participants *and* politically active at the same time, without a direct relation between the two forms of involvement. To take such effects into account, we control the association between civic participation and political action for background characteristics: gender; education; income; income source; age (as a non-linear effect - see Putnam, 2000); length of residence in a community; urbanization of residence; marital status; household size; denomination; church attendance; and citizenship. Measures of pro-social dispositions are scarce, unfortunately, although the indicators of civic-mindedness (see below) cover one aspect of this disposition. Nevertheless, we cannot completely rule out selection effects due to a lack of available measures of a pro-social disposition in our data set.

Intermediating Factors

Finally, the ESS dataset includes proxy-measures of civic skills and civic-mindedness that, according to the fifth claim, we expect to intermediate the association between civic participation and political action. First we distinguish measures of political interest. One is self-reported political interest. The second is the use of media: the time people spend watching television (to measure disinterest in politics), and watching the news more specific (to measure interest in politics). Next, we distinguish two measures of trust: trust in other people and trust in the national parliament. Third, political efficacy – the idea that the respondent is able to affect the political process – is measured in two aspects: with regard to knowledge (whether one thinks politics is too complicated to understand) and with regard to skills (whether one could take an active role in a political group). Finally, political cynicism is measured as agreement with the idea that politicians do not care for the voice of the respondent.

[2] For reasons of conceptual clarity, we leave out some forms of political action. Discussing politics with peers is both a measure of political interest and a measure of political action. To keep the boundaries of these concepts clear empirically, we leave them out of the analysis.
We also do not include voting turnout. The neo-Tocquevillian literature focuses strongly on political activities that need a pro-social attitude, social and political skills. Voting, however, is a more ritualistic activity, needing little political skills. Moreover, it is strongly affected by the voting and party systems, which we are not able to pay proper attention to within the confines of this paper. We leave it to a future study to investigate the association between civic participation and voting.

Analyses
The respondents in our dataset are nested in different countries. We therefore employ multi-level analysis (Snijders & Bosker, 1999) using the ML-WIN 2.0 package (Goldstein, 1995) for all subsequent models. As the dependent variables (conventional and unconventional political participation) are dichotomous, we use multi-level logistic regression (PQL, 2nd Order, no extra-binominal variance assumed). We specify models (simultaneously at the individual and contextual level) that estimate the odds of participating politically. Positive values indicate a higher chance of being conventionally or unconventionally politically active, negative values a lower chance. Respondents with one or more missing values on any of the variables were left out of the analyses; all models are based on the same set of respondents.

8.4 The Base Claim

Our first claim is the most basic claim in neo-Tocquevillian theory.
Hypothesis 1: There is a strong, positive relationship between civic participation and political action.

Almond and Verba (1965) were the first to posit this claim in a systematic, empirical fashion. Based on data from five countries, they concluded that, in general, members in voluntary associations are different from non-members in the sense that they (i) feel more confident of their ability to influence the government; (ii) are more active in politics; (iii) are more "open" in their political opinions; and (iv) are more committed to democratic values. Several scholars have worked in this tradition, finding positive associations (Verba, et al., 1995), and the idea has come to a point where it is almost axiomatic. Nevertheless, we will (re-)test this claim, if only to use it as a reference for the subsequent (more specific) analyses. As the mechanisms described in neo-Tocquevillian theory are inherently individual, they should be analyzed at that level. This avoids the risk of ecological fallacy.

Table 8.1 shows that the association between civic participation and political action still holds in the modern day European countries that are represented in our dataset. Even when we control for background characteristics, there are strong, positive effects of civic participation. In other words, the base claim of the stepping stone thesis is supported by our findings. Table 8.1 also shows that the positive effect of civic participation is stronger on conventional than on unconventional political participation, although the difference between the two effects is small.

With regard to our control factors, we find that education, income and citizenship all contribute to both modes of political participation. Religion has mixed effects: Catholics are less likely to participate politically on both dimensions, whereas Protestants are less likely to be involved in conventional political action and

more likely to be involved in unconventional political action (compared to non-religious). Church attendance functions as a counterweight to these negative effects on conventional political action. Effects of gender, urbanization and length of residence support our theoretical distinction between conventional and unconventional political action. Men and people from rural areas are more likely to be involved in conventional political action. However, women, citizens living in urbanized communities, and citizens who lived for a relative short time span in their communities, are more likely to participate unconventionally. In subsequent models we control for these determinants, but to save space, we do not present them in the tables.

Table 8.1
Civic Participation and Political Action

	Conventional	Unconventional
Participation in voluntary associations	0.38* (0.01)	0.34* (0.01)
Woman	-0.18* (0.03)	0.22* (0.03)
Age	0.02* (0.01)	0.04* (0.01)
Age Squared (*100)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.04* (0.01)
Income	0.02* (0.01)	0.07* (0.01)
Education	0.19* (0.01)	0.23* (0.01)
Reside	0.01 (0.01)	-0.07* (0.01)
Household Size	0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)
Urbanization	-0.03* (0.02)	0.09* (0.01)
Income source (job):		
* Pensioned	-0.01 (0.06)	0.02 (0.05)
* Unemployed	0.23* (0.12)	0.15 (0.11)
* Other benefits	0.45* (0.09)	-0.09 (0.09)
* Other income	0.39* (0.13)	0.26* (0.13)
Marital status (mar):		
* Separated	-0.05 (0.13)	0.09 (0.12)
* Divorced	0.10 (0.07)	0.11* (0.06)
* Widowed	-0.03 (0.07)	0.00 (0.07)
* Unmarried	-0.03 (0.05)	0.16* (0.05)
Kid at home	-0.05 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.04)
Citizen	0.22* (0.11)	0.43* (0.10)
Religious attendance	0.04* (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Religion (none):		
* Catholic	-0.11* (0.05)	-0.15* (0.05)
* Protestant	-0.07* (0.05)	0.09* (0.05)
* Orthodox	-0.26 (0.19)	-0.39* (0.18)
* Other	-0.18* (0.10)	0.04 (0.09)

(Hierarchical logistic regression, PQL, 2nd Order, no extra-binominal variance assumed)
(Unstandardized coefficients, standard errors between brackets)
** p<.05 (two-tailed).*

8.5 The Second Claim: Type of Association Matters

In recent years, several authors have examined how effects of civic participation differ between the types of associations in which people participate (Stolle &

Rochon, 1998). "Advocates of social capital and civil society acknowledged that not all associations might be equally well equipped to function as "schools of democracy" and as an aid to social and political problems" (Roßteutscher & Van Deth, 2002). There are two lines of reasoning that justify the expectation of differences in effect sizes between types of associations.

Theoretically, leisure associations serve as the most important stepping stone towards political action in the neo-Tocquevillian argument. Putnam (2000) emphasizes the role of associations like bird watcher clubs, choirs and bowling leagues, as they are heterogeneous (Coffé & Geys, 2007b) and built around horizontal face to face relations. Heterogeneous associations stimulate public discourse and deliberation (Gutmann, 1998). Experiences in groups with demographic differences allow the "leap of faith" from in-group to generalized trust (Stolle, 1998). As heterogeneous associations are better representatives of society as a whole than homogeneous association, positive experiences in these contexts serve as better "preparations" for society at large. A second argument is the *horizontal structure* leisure organizations often have. An "internal organizational democracy" is traditionally seen as a requirement for learning about cooperation and proliferation of civic virtues (Putnam, 1993; Selle & Stromsnes, 2001), as a horizontal structure offers opportunities for the majority of the members to become engaged.

Empirical evidence on the relationship between leisure associations and politics is ambiguous. In Norway, for example, Seippel (2006) found that participation in sports clubs can increase levels of trust and political commitment. However, other types of associations performed better, as did multiple memberships. Similarly, other authors claimed a positive democratic role of "community gardening" (Glover, Shinew, & Parry, 2005; Shinew, Glover, & Parry, 2004), singing (Jeannotte, 2003), and social gatherings in bars and coffeehouses (Oldenburg, 1989). On the other hand, Armingeon (2007) finds that members of non-political organizations like "bird watchers and members of soccer clubs [are] hardly more prone to participate politically than [...] citizens without any active associational involvement". Erickson and Nosanchuk (1990) conclude that "intense involvement in a very apolitical organization is at best irrelevant to political participation and may even divert people from political activity".

The alternative line of reasoning focuses on the *goal* of the organizations and comes to different expectations. Some organizations have an inherently politicized dimension (Donovan, et al., 2004), most notably interest organizations such as labour unions, and activist organizations such as environmental groups. Citizens join an interest organizations to defend the direct interests of their specific group, and join an activist group to defend a broader societal cause not directly beneficial to its own constituents (Newton, 1999). In both cases, a group of people has a desire that will be hard to meet without exerting influence on politics and government. In these organizations, citizens come into contact with political processes, and with a network of people who have the skills and the mindset to participate politically.

Consequently, members of interest and activist organizations are more likely to obtain civic-mindedness, political interest and familiarity with political procedures. Leisure organizations, on the other hand, do not have goals that are related to political processes (with the exception of an incidental call for a permit). Since involvement in cultural associations and sports clubs mainly serves entertainment purposes, one would expect smaller effects on political participation.

Therefore, we come to two hypotheses (H2a and H2b) against we formulate an alternative hypothesis (H2c).

Hypothesis 2a: The effect of civic participation on political action is positive for all types of voluntary association.

Hypothesis 2b: The effect of civic participation on political action is stronger for leisure organizations than for interest and activist organizations.

Hypothesis 2c: The effect of civic participation on political action is stronger for interest and activist organizations than for leisure organizations.

To test these hypotheses, we simultaneously inserted three measures of civic participation in Table 8.2: participation in leisure, interest and activist organizations.

The first thing to note from Table 8.2 is that involvement in any of the three types of voluntary associations has a positive impact on the chance to participate politically. Taking participatory overlap into account, the effects remain positive for all types of voluntary associations. In other words, participation in each type of association contributes to political action. Contrary to Bowler et al. (2003) we do find that leisure associations have a positive impact on both modes of political participation. This supports hypothesis H2a.

Table 8.2
Civic Participation and Political Action, by Type of Organization

	Conventional	Unconventional
Participation in leisure organizations	0.18* (0.01)	0.16* (0.01)
Participation in interest organizations	0.29* (0.02)	0.21* (0.02)
Participation in activist organizations	0.37* (0.02)	0.51* (0.02)

(Hierarchical logistic regression, PQL, 2nd Order, no extra-binominal variance assumed)
(Unstandardized coefficients, standard errors between brackets)
** p<.05 (two-tailed).*

Second, as expected, the effects are not equally strong. Participation in activist organizations is more strongly related to political participation than the others. Although we repeat again that we cannot make causal inferences, the high correlations of participation in activist organizations support the politicization argument rather than the neo-Tocquevillian claim. The leisure organizations (encompassing the bowling clubs, the bird watchers, the Elks, the choirs and the reading groups) that are emphasized by Putnam are least strongly related to political action. These findings are in line with a similar analysis by Van Deth (2007), who

focuses on the impact of civic participation in twelve types of voluntary associations on political engagement (interest and saliency).

In short, our analysis gives uniform support for hypothesis H2c and none for H2b. We find the smallest impact from involvement in leisure organizations, and the strongest impact from involvement in activist organizations. Interest organizations fall somewhat in the middle.

Third, we can look into the differences across types of associations in more detail, by comparing the impact of each type of organization across modes of political action. The impact of participation in interest organizations is significantly stronger on conventional than on unconventional political action. Participation in activist organizations, on the other hand, is more strongly related to unconventional than to conventional political action. Finally, for participation in leisure organizations there is no significant difference in the size of the effects.

8.6 The Third Claim: Cross-National Variance

Although the neo-Tocquevillian approach finds its theoretical and empirical roots in American political science, the socialization mechanism is regarded as a universal characteristic of stable democracies (Howard & Leah 2008). Nevertheless, a universal, positive association between civic participation and political action is not evident at all (Armony, 2004). The social spiral may depend on the institutional environment. The literature offers different theories. One claims that the social spiral may not function in countries that have, or recently had, a repressive regime. In authoritarian or totalitarian regimes the state controls the public sphere, and citizens take refuge in small, private networks (Howard, 2003). In such a regime, associations' most important function is opposing the political system, rather than supporting it (Fung, 2003). Another theory focuses on the institutional relationship between state and civil society. When states actively seek cooperation with voluntary association in the policy process (that is, in pluralist and corporatist societies), members are more likely to contact officials, engage in politics, and have an entrance to political life (Bowler, et al., 2003). Yet, when bureaucracies actively discourage voluntary associations to contribute to public affairs (that is, in statist societies), the social spiral is expected to be far weaker or even absent.

Therefore, we test whether hypothesis H1 holds in all of the 17 European countries that are in our dataset. Until now, we acknowledged that the respondents in our dataset are citizens who are nested in countries (and treated them as such in hierarchical analyses), but we have not yet allowed the associations to vary cross-nationally. Here we test the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 3a: The effect of civic participation on political action is positive in all countries.

Hypothesis 3b: The effect of civic participation on political action is similar in all countries.

Table 8.3 displays the results of analyses on the country level variance (U) of the association (B). In general, we find the association between civic participation and political action to be positive for all distinctions.

Hypothesis H3a is supported: the association between civic participation and political action is positive in all countries under study. However, this is not to say that the association is similar in all these countries. We hardly find any significant cross-national variance in the strength of the association between civic participation and political action. Regarding unconventional political action there is no significant variance in the effect slope for participation in any type of voluntary association. This supports hypothesis H3b. Regarding conventional political action, however, there is some slope variance to be explained for participation in leisure and interest organizations, although these effects are rather small. Being strict, we should reject hypothesis H3b. Despite the large country differences in levels of civic participation and political action, the strength of their correlation shows little variation. Apparently, at the individual level the two co-vary similarly in all countries. This does not imply, however, that the institutional and cultural environment does not matter. Yet, based on these results there are no a-priori reasons to assume that different mechanisms are at play.

Table 8.3
Cross-National Differences in the Relation between Civic Participation and Political Action

	Conventional	Unconventional
Participation in leisure organizations	0.21* (0.03)	0.16* (0.02)
Country level variance (U)	0.01* (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Participation in interest organizations	0.31* (0.04)	0.21* (0.02)
Country level variance (U)	0.01* (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)
Participation in activist organizations	0.37* (0.03)	0.52* (0.04)
Country level variance (U)	0.01 (0.00)	0.01 (0.01)

(Hierarchical logistic regression, PQL, 2nd Order, no extra-binominal variance assumed)
(Unstandardized coefficients, standard errors between brackets)
** p<.05 (two-tailed).*

8.7 The Fourth Claim: Extent of Involvement

Several researchers have formulated more nuanced hypotheses on associational effects, paying attention to the mode of participation (Anheier & Kendall, 2002; Glanville, 2004; Stolle & Rochon, 1998). Higher levels of involvement come with more "exposure" to and interactions with other members, and often more tasks to accomplish and a more important position in the organization. The greater the involvement and cooperation, the greater the chances of positive effects arising

(Rosenblum, 1998). In our study, we would expect subsequent levels of civic participation to be related to increased political action: the most intensive civic participants should be the most involved in political action.

But are subsequent levels of civic participation also expected to contribute to political action equally? Or are some levels of involvement or types of civic activities more important than others? Or, to rephrase these questions in technical terms: is the effect of civic participation linear? When it comes to the *number* of actions that can be deployed in voluntary associations, the existing literature offers no clear expectations. However, a lot of focus has been put on the unequal importance of certain *types* of civic activities.

In the neo-Tocquevillian line of reasoning some types of activities are more beneficial than others. A distinction is made between passive involvement (for example, formal membership or donating money) and active participation (for example, partaking in activities or doing voluntary work). Being involved in voluntary work is most likely to be beneficial for political engagement. According to Wilson (2000), the difference between active and passive involvement coincides with producing versus consuming collective goods. Helping to produce some common good is the kind of experience researchers expect to have beneficial side effects, such as stimulating democratic values and increasing political skills and interests. Erickson and Nosanchuk (1990) emphasize that volunteers – compared to ordinary members – are more involved in the administrative work of organizations. Volunteer work can involve activities that are like politics on a small scale: organizing, meeting, discussing, planning, and contacting officials and administrators. Knoke (1990) concludes that participation in the internal politics of an organization is strongly related to being involved in external politics, although the relationship was stronger for "problem-solving organizations" then for "non problem-solving organizations".

Ordinary – passive – members do not have these experiences. Rather, most authors expect little impact from passive involvement ("checkbook membership"), because the social spiral is supposed to be caused by socialization and network effects. These can only take place through face to face interaction (e.g., Putnam, 2000; Skocpol, 2003). Putnam (2000), for example, expects little "social capital effects" from passive involvement, since checkbook membership does not bring people into contact with other members. However, we must not completely rule out passive membership as a source of political engagement (Selle & Stromsnes, 2001). There are some ways in which this could still have an encouraging effect. For example, members often receive newsletters that can trigger political interest, passive membership may evoke a certain commitment and identification with political causes, or fellow (passive) members may meet outside the organization and still have political discussions as a result of their membership (Wollebaek & Selle, 2002). Nevertheless, these effects of passive membership should pale in comparison to the socialization effects of active involvement.

Hypothesis 4a: The higher the level of civic participation, the higher the level of political action.
Hypothesis 4b: Passively involved citizens are as politically active as non-involved.
Hypothesis 4c: Compared to passive members, volunteers and active participants will show disproportionately higher levels of political action.

To test hypotheses H4a, H4b and H4c we dissected the civic participation scales that we used in Table 8.2 by showing the results for each category (0-4) on the scales separately. This enables us to test hypothesis H4a. Hypothesis 4b and 4c can be tested by the same measures: as we noted above, the Mokken scales are constructed by the count procedure. The "easiest items" for each of the three scales were measures of passive involvement: membership (for leisure and interest organizations) and donation (for activist organizations). We can compare whether this first step makes a difference, or whether the subsequent steps are more important determinants of political action. [3]

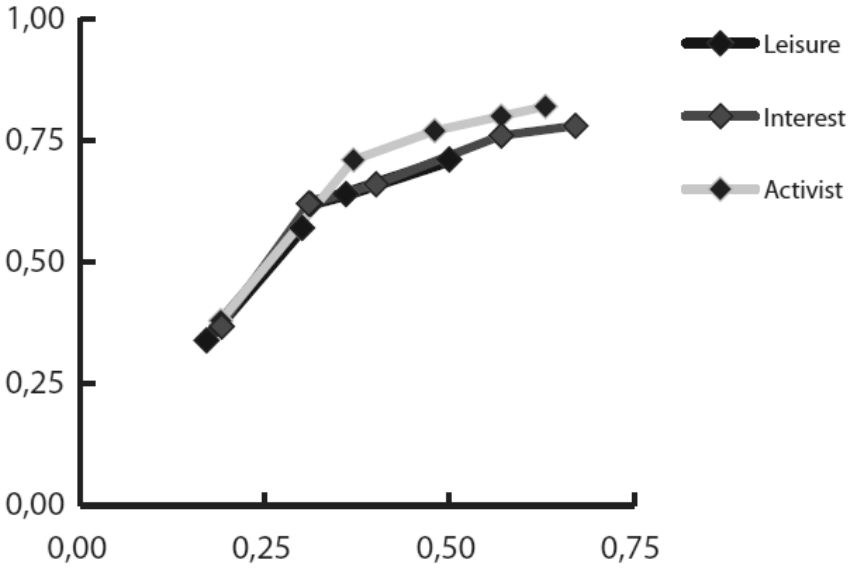
Figure 8.1 describes the differences between the five categories of each of the three scales, without controls for the background characteristics. On the horizontal axis the figure displays the average level of conventional political action, on the vertical axis the average level of unconventional political action. The three lines represent the three types of associations; the sequence of dots on each line represents the intensity of civic participation (0-4).

As Figure 8.1 clearly shows, all categories of civic participation are positively related to political action. The average level of political action rises with each subsequent category of civic participants. This gives credibility to hypothesis H4a. The most important difference in political action is between those who are not involved in voluntary associations and those who are, regardless of the extent and the type of activities. Of course, the latter criteria play a role, but not as much as the differences between the civically involved and the civically non-involved. Especially when we look at unconventional political action, it seems to be the first step that counts.

The true proof of the pudding is not in Figure 8.1, however, but in the multivariate analysis of Table 8.4. The findings of Table 8.4 strongly echo those from Figure 8.1. The effect of each category of civic participation on political action (compared to the reference group of the non-involved) is significant and strongly positive. Moreover – with the exception of the first few step in leisure associations – subsequent levels of civic participation are related to more political action. This roughly supports hypothesis H4a, the claim that a higher degree of involvement in voluntary associations leads to a higher chance of participation politically.

[3] To test this even further, we ran different models, including a *typology of activities* in voluntary associations rather than the categorized scale used in Table 4. These additional tests confirm the results in Table 4. (Tables are available from the authors on request.)

Figure 8.1
Degree of political participation (Y = nonconventional; X = conventional), by intensity of civic participation (0 - 4)



However, the effect of degree of civic participation on political action is not linear. In general, the step that increases the odds of political action most, is the one from no involvement to doing one civic activity. In other words, the most important difference in terms of political action is between those who are and those who are not involved in a voluntary association. This is most apparent for leisure organizations, where in fact only two steps seem to matter: from no civic involvement to some, and from three civic activities to four. For interest organizations, on the other hand, subsequent steps contribute to political action more equally.

The effect of civic participation on political action is clearly not linear. But what does this mean? If we go back to the general meaning of the civic participation scales, we recapitulate that for each of the three scales the easiest item (the first category on the scales) is a measure of passive involvement. For leisure and interest organizations category 1 generally represents "membership", for activist organizations "donation of money". And, surprisingly, we find that this measure of passive involvement is in fact the most important step stimulating political action. As "doing anything at all" generally means passive involvement (membership or donation of money), these are apparently relatively strong determinants of political action. This completely opposes the neo-Tocquevillian claims that passive

involvement is of little or no use, and that active involvement and face-to-face contacts are necessary preconditions for the social spiral to set in. Therefore, hypothesis H4b is refuted. Reasoning from our theoretical perspective, this finding is surprising. However, a comparable result was found in other recent research, with regard to the generation of trust (Wollebaek & Selle, 2007).

Likewise, hypothesis H4c is refuted. Levels of political action are higher amongst active participants. But contrary to our expectations, active participation is hardly the most important determinant. The main distinction in terms of political action is between the non-involved and the involved, regardless whether the latter are passive or active.

Table 8.4
Extent of Involvement in Voluntary Associations and Political Action

	Conventional	Unconventional
Participation in leisure organizations:		
* no activities (ref)	0	0
* 1 activity	0.42* (0.04)	0.40* (0.04)
* 2 activities	0.44* (0.05)	0.45* (0.05)
* 3 activities	0.48* (0.06)	0.42* (0.06)
* 4 activities	0.82* (0.07)	0.63* (0.07)
Participation in interest organizations:		
* no activities (ref)	0	0
* 1 activity	0.34* (0.04)	0.28* (0.04)
* 2 activities	0.57* (0.06)	0.42* (0.06)
* 3 activities	0.91* (0.09)	0.64* (0.10)
* 4 activities	1.09* (0.16)	0.71* (0.18)
Participation in activist organizations:		
* no activities (ref)	0	0
* 1 activity	0.49* (0.04)	0.69* (0.04)
* 2 activities	0.71* (0.06)	1.03* (0.07)
* 3 activities	1.13* (0.12)	1.24* (0.14)
* 4 activities	1.21* (0.15)	1.34* (0.17)

(Hierarchical logistic regression, PQL, 2nd Order, no extra-binominal variance assumed)
(Unstandardized coefficients, standard errors between brackets)
** p<.05 (two-tailed).*

8.8 The Fifth Claim: Civic-Mindedness and Civic Skills as Explaining Mechanisms

So far, we have tested several neo-Tocquevillian claims without explicitly dealing with their rationale – the expected underlying mechanisms. In this section we delve into the mechanisms that supposedly explain the relationship. Although the neo-Tocquevillian approach has been criticized for lack of focus on these mechanisms (Mondak & Mutz, 1997; Stolle, 2001), a process of socialization is claimed to account for the relationship between civic participation and political action. In this reasoning, voluntary associations are schools of democracy, because they provide their members with the competence (civic skills) and the mindset (civic-mindedness) to participate in the wider, political world (Ayala, 2000; Morales, 2002). "De

Tocqueville argued that secondary associations draw individuals out of their primary associations, educating them about their dependence upon others" (Warren, 2001, p. 30). Similar ideas can be found in the work of Putnam (2000): "Internally, associations and less formal networks of civic engagement instill in their members habits of cooperation and public spiritedness, as well as the practical skills necessary to partake in public life".

Civic-mindedness is the outcome of interactions with diverse others. One of the main concerns of voluntary associations is "cultivating the disposition to cooperate" (Rosenblum, 1998). Getting to know people from different backgrounds, and bridging gaps in language and customs contribute to tolerances and appreciation of diversity. Civic participation thus "makes people care more, and think more, about the wider world" (Eliasoph, 1998). Furthermore, voluntary associations "contribute to the shaping of public discourse", by creating collective values (Wuthnow, 1991). The instilling of civic values needs not be purposive; it can also occur as a side-effect of participation.

Like civic values, the creation of civic skills is related to being part of an organization: members cooperate with others, speak up in meetings, perform tasks for the group and make arrangements with third-parties (Ayala, 2000; Verba, et al., 1995). People who are involved in organizations in this sense are likely to get into contact with administrators, officials, and politicians. They become exposed to political processes, policy making and the implementation of legislation, causing a strong link between involvement in the internal politics of an organization and involvement in external politics (Knoke, 1990).

The mechanism of political socialization is the cornerstone of neo-Tocquevillian theory, which sets it apart from the rival selection explanation. If civic skills and civic-mindedness cannot explain the correlation between civic participation and political action, the socialization thesis needs revision, possibly in favor of the selection mechanism.

Hypothesis 5: The association between civic participation and political action is explained by civic skills and civic-mindedness.

In statistical terms, we expect a mediating effect of civic skills and civic-mindedness. We should see a decline in the effect of civic participation once civic skills and civic-mindedness are taken into account.

To test whether hypothesis H5 holds, we elaborate on our most sophisticated model – shown in Table 8.4 – by incorporating measures of civic skills and civic-mindedness as determinants of conventional and unconventional political action. If the causal chain indeed goes from civic participation through civic skills and civic-mindedness to political action, the direct effects of civic participation should be

strongly reduced by the incorporation of these intermediary variables. This should become apparent by comparison of the effect sizes in Table 8.4 and Table 8.5.[4]

Table 8.5 shows that most of the direct effects of the intermediary variables are significant and in the expected direction. A high level of (self-reported) civic skills (political efficacy) and civic-mindedness (political interest, social trust, absence of political cynicism, watching politics on television) is related to a high level of political action. The civic skill of political understanding is not significantly related to either mode of political action.

Table 8.5
Civic Skills and Civic-Mindedness as Explaining Mechanisms

	Conventional	Unconventional
Participation in leisure organizations:		
* no activities (ref)	0	0
* 1 activity	0.36* (0.04)	0.34* (0.04)
* 2 activities	0.37* (0.05)	0.38* (0.05)
* 3 activities	0.40* (0.06)	0.34* (0.06)
* 4 activities	0.70* (0.08)	0.50* (0.07)
Participation in interest organizations:		
* no activities (ref)	0	0
* 1 activity	0.29* (0.04)	0.24* (0.04)
* 2 activities	0.51* (0.07)	0.37* (0.06)
* 3 activities	0.74* (0.10)	0.51* (0.10)
* 4 activities	0.79* (0.17)	0.46* (0.18)
Participation in activist organizations:		
* no activities (ref)	0	0
* 1 activity	0.40* (0.04)	0.62* (0.04)
* 2 activities	0.60* (0.07)	0.95* (0.07)
* 3 activities	0.93* (0.12)	1.11* (0.15)
* 4 activities	1.00* (0.15)	1.16* (0.18)
Political interest	0.40* (0.02)	0.37* (0.02)
Political efficacy	0.29* (0.01)	0.15* (0.01)
Political understanding	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Political cynicism	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.03* (0.02)
Political trust	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.04* (0.01)
Time spent watching tv	-0.05* (0.01)	-0.06* (0.01)
Time spent watching politics on tv	0.03* (0.02)	0.05* (0.01)
Social trust	-0.01 (0.01)	0.04* (0.01)

(Hierarchical logistic regression, PQL, 2nd Order, no extra-binominal variance assumed)
(Unstandardized coefficients, standard errors between brackets)
** p<.05 (two-tailed).*

[4] In our cross-sectional (i.e. non-panel) analysis we cannot *verify* the fifth claim. Even if we do find that the effect of civic participation is strongly reduced by incorporating civic skills and civic-mindedness, this does not necessarily mean that the neo-Tocquevillian line of reasoning is right. It could signal an intermediary effect (which is the claim we test), but could also signal a spurious relationship (civic participation and political action are not directly related, but both caused by civic skills and civic-mindedness). This selection effect is plausible as well: people who have more social and civic resources, and who are more confident may be more inclined to participate civically *and* politically.

Remarkably, the effect of political trust is negative. Our findings suggest that people who are less trusting in politics, are somewhat more likely to participate politically. As the effect of political trust did not turn out negative in the bivariate association, we considered the possibility that the negative effect in Table 8.5 might have been caused by multicollinearity. However, additional tests showed this was not the case. Note that low levels of political trust do not necessarily mean that citizens are cynical; they could also be skeptics: citizens who simply do not trust politicians on their blue eyes. They feel the need to participate politically, if only to keep the politicians on their toes (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002). Conversely, previous research also found examples of citizens who are not actively involved, but who do show high levels of political trust and interest. Van Deth labeled them "political spectators" (Van Deth, 2000).

The crucial question is, of course, whether the inclusion of the intermediary variables also reduces the direct effect of civic participation. The answer to this question is a clear no. Comparison of the effects in Tables 8.4 and 8.5 univocally refute hypothesis H5. Admittedly, the estimated effect sizes of civic participation are somewhat smaller in Table 8.5 than in Table 8.4 – the decrease ranging between 10 and 20 percent, with a peak at 35%. But this reduction is not near the strong reduction expected from true intermediary effects. Moreover, in none of the cases is the decrease in effect size significant.[5]

We should conclude that the socialization mechanism does not explain the strong correlations between civic participation and political action we have found throughout this paper. Another mechanism must account for the correlation.

8.9 Summary and Discussion

In this paper, we have attempted to disentangle the neo-Tocquevillian theory into five empirically testable claims. The quintessence of the paradigm is that participation in voluntary associations leads to political action through a *socialization* mechanism. Voluntary associations form a friendly environment in which interactions are converted into positive experiences. In these "schools of democracy" people learn the value of cooperating with others with different backgrounds. Moreover, they acquire skills in debating, negotiating, organizing events, and managing an organization. This adds up to an increased level of political

[5] Admittedly, due to the splintered nature of our civic participation measures it might be hard for an effect size to decrease significantly. Therefore we also did separate analyses in which we included the intermediary variables in Table 1 and in Table 2. Although the decline of the effect size of civic participation reached significance in these cases, the reduction of the effect was limited to a meagre 12 to 13 per cent. This still does not approach the strong reduction of the effect size needed to support Hypothesis 5.

action among members; they have acquired both the skills and the urge to become involved. Theoretically, the idea is attractive. As active citizens are needed for a properly functioning democracy, why not get them involved through voluntary associations? Empirically, however, the evidence does not build a strong case.

The first of five claims we advanced to test the empirical validity of the theory was *"There is a strong, positive relationship between civic participation and political action"*. The claim of universal validity was made explicit in our third claim, *"The relationship is universal for all (Western) democratic societies"*. Both claims were supported by our data, the relationship between civic participation and political action was positive and significant in each country.

These findings, however, are far from sufficient evidence for the neo-Tocquevillian theory. They only prove that there is a universal, strong and positive correlation between civic participation and political action. Tests of the three remaining claims cast severe doubts on whether this correlation can be explained by a socialization mechanism.

In our second claim we argued that – if socialization is the guiding mechanism – we should see that: "The strength of this relationship differs according to the type of voluntary association: leisure organizations are more important than interest and activist organizations". In line with the neo-Tocquevillian literature we expected the strongest effects to emerge among the associations with most social interaction, that is, leisure organizations. However, our findings indicate the opposite: leisure associations bring about the smallest effects. Rather, the correlations with political action are strongest for involvement in interest organizations and activist organizations – organizations with goals that are related to politics, or that need political support to be attained. This implies that the goals of associations are more important than their structure. A selection effect is a far more plausible explanation here: people who are more politically minded in the first place join associations more often and show higher levels of political action. They join interest and/or activist – and not leisure – organizations for the same reasons why they become politically active, namely to reach specific political goals or get involved in political discourse.

Our fourth claim stated that *"The strength of this relationship differs according to the extent of involvement"*. Our analysis revealed that the first step of involvement in an organization is the most important; the biggest difference in political action is between non-involvement and passive involvement. Although there is little socialization effect to be expected from a neo-Tocquevillian point of view, checkbook membership turns out to be the most important determinant of political action. This, too, points to selection rather than socialization effects: Passive members can hardly be socialized by the association, so we should look for the reason why they are politically active in themselves rather than their association. A pre-existing pro-social disposition or specific interest might explain the "effect" of passive membership.

A dynamic of selection and adaptation could account for these associational effects (Hooghe, 2003a; Hooghe & Stolle, 2003). The core of this idea is that the socialization and self-selection mechanisms are not mutually exclusive, but depend on each other. Socialization effects cannot emerge without preceding selection. Members are confirmed and further stimulated in their initial values and behavior only when *value congruence* emerges. If people do not meet with similar others, there will be no socialization effect. Our findings imply that selection effects account for a large part of the correlation between civic participation and political action: if not, we would not find such strong effects of passive involvement. However, additional effects of higher levels of involvement remain, and the question is: could this *additional* effect be explained as the outcome of a socialization process?

There are strong indications that the answer is "no". This becomes clear when we look at our final claim: "The relationship is explained by a socialization mechanism, i.e. associational involvement increases levels of civic skills and civic-mindedness which in turn stimulates political action". If the increase in political action among the most active civic participants is the result of socialization, civic skills and civic-mindedness should explain much of this correlation. Yet, our analyses told a different story. The socialization mechanism on which the neo-Tocquevillian theory is built faces serious lack of empirical support. Voluntary associations do not contribute to their members' levels of political action; instead, their members were already more likely to participate politically. Rather than schools of democracy this makes voluntary associations pools of democracy.

Nevertheless, even if they are not socializing agencies, voluntary associations may still contribute to democratic societies in other ways. As pools of democracy, voluntary associations facilitate high levels of social capital, although they do not generate them (Wollebaek & Selle, 2007). By combining the pooled skills of their members, voluntary associations may balance (and even resist) governmental power, and represent the interests of their constituencies (Fung, 2003).

The assertion of associations as pools of democracy opens up a set of intriguing research questions. First, how does the process of selection and adaptation take place? Which crucial pro-social selection criteria are at play? These need not even be the same in different countries. Again, we point to the necessity of a broad and time-spanning panel study to shed light on the causality at play. Second, even if voluntary associations do not stimulate political action among adults, might they nevertheless socialize the youth? More generally, we need a lifecycle perspective on the socialization effect: do early socialization effects hold over a lifetime, or do they need constant confirmation? And finally, if voluntary associations do not function as schools of democracy, what about other candidates such as the workplace, church, school, and the family?

In sum, the results of our study imply that there are no easy ways to generate politically engaged citizens. Voluntary associations do not make citizens politically

active, but bring politically active citizens together. Social scientists should not assume that these associations socialize their members. Rather, they should look for the ways in which society might benefit from the potential in these pools of democracy.

9. Does Voluntary Association Participation Boost Social Resources?[1]

Abstract

Conflicting arguments exist in the literature about whether associational involvement can enhance people's social resources (operationalized as the extent to which people have nearby social networks they can rely on). We argue that it is necessary to analyze panel data if we want to examine this type of question, as a causal order is presumed: participation as antecedent and social resources as outcome. To test the participation effect, we compared two groups: respondents who became a member of an association (between the two waves) and respondents who remained uninvolved. In line with the more skeptical ideas about voluntary associations, we did not find an effect for membership. However, our analysis of volunteering did show a small, positive effect on growth of social resources. Similarly, we found participation effects among groups with fewer possibilities to acquire social resources in other contexts (the elderly, people without a partner, and ethnic minorities).

[1] A slightly different version of this chapter, with Matthijs Kalmijn as co-author, is accepted for publication in *Social Science Quarterly* (Van Ingen & Kalmijn, in press).

9.1 Introduction

A paradox exists in the study of voluntary association participation. On the one hand, the effects or side effects of participation legitimize the study of the topic. It would not make much sense to examine trends in memberships, for example, if nothing would be gained or lost with a rise or fall. On the other hand, whereas inequality or trends in participation have been examined extensively, few of the presumed effects of participation have been put to a proper test. One of the main problems in previous studies is the lack of longitudinal panel data. Most previous studies are based on cross-sectional designs, and in such designs little can be said about causality issues. Because it is plausible to expect that selection effects occur in the relationship between participation and its outcomes, cross-sectional studies give us incomplete insights.

In our view, the conclusions about the effects of voluntary association participation would improve considerably when analyses would be based on dynamic (panel) data instead of cross-sectional data. Although panel data cannot prove causality either, they are widely regarded as the most important way to examine mutual causality and to rule out selection effects. While longitudinal designs have become increasingly common in other research areas in sociology (e.g., social stratification, social demography, health), they have so far rarely been used in the study of voluntary associations. An exception is the research with regard to well-being and mental health (Musick & Wilson, 2003; Piliavin & Siegl, 2007).

We will refer to the causal effect of associational involvement on its outcome as a *participation effect*, in contrast to *selection effects*. It is only justified to draw conclusions about participation effects if differences between members and non-members occur after entry in an organization, resulting from a process of growth that is brought about by associational experiences. To make sure this is the case, we will use data from a two-wave panel study and compare the group that entered at least one association between the waves with the group that remained uninvolved, and we will examine whether these groups show a different growth in our dependent variable: social resources. These are defined as the extent to which an individual has a social network of nearby contacts that can be mobilized for help and support. In other words, our first and most general research question is: does voluntary association participation boost social resources?

This type of research is sometimes conducted under the rubric of social capital, or positive outcomes of social networks. Previous social capital research has focused both on individual level benefits (cf. Coleman, 1990; Lin, 2001), as well as collective benefits (cf. Putnam, 2000). Our research examines to what extent *social participation* converts into *social capital*. When participation effects occur the connections that are created and maintained in the context of voluntary associations pay off; they convert into resources.

One of the critiques on the current research is that it lacks theoretical mechanisms that link the associational experiences to the consequences (Stolle, 2001). When social resources are studied as outcome, the mechanism is straightforward and has an intuitive logic: when people enter an association, they are exposed to a set of fellow members and engage in activities which usually require interaction and cooperation. This will create bonds between members, which may increase in strength when the involvement continues. Little empirical research has been conducted on the relation between associational participation and social resources. Studies exist of the influence of social networks on participation (Bekkers, et al., 2007; McPherson, et al., 1992; Wilson & Musick, 1998), but – apart from the fact that social *networks* do not equal social *resources* – these studies have only examined the selection (or recruitment) effect in this relationship, not the possible participation effect.

In the theoretical section of this paper we will discuss arguments for and against participation effects regarding social resources. Additionally, we suggest that it might not be a matter of merely yes or no, but that a conditional answer may be needed. Researchers increasingly recognize the limited possibilities of generalizability in the study of associations (Tschirhart, 2006), and are starting to pay attention to the circumstances under which effects emerge. One of the dimensions of that participation is the degree and type of involvement. Volunteering is often seen as a special case of associational involvement (Wilson, 2000), as a more dedicated and time-consuming activity than "ordinary membership", which should thus produce stronger effects. Although we see no reason why ordinary membership would not bring about participation effects regarding social resources, we will additionally examine the effects of volunteering.

Finally, we will examine participation effects for specific groups. Li and Ferraro (2006) conclude that there is much life course variation in the relation between volunteering and health. In the case of social resources and isolation, it is quite common to look at the elderly (De Jong-Gierveld & Dykstra, 2008; Dykstra, Van Tilburg, & De Jong-Gierveld, 2005b), as the availability of social resources is presumably most problematic in this group. In general, it makes sense to study the groups who have something to gain from associational involvement. Since many of the outcomes can also be produced in other social contexts, it is possible that associational involvement does not cause a certain effect despite its capacity to do so. In this paper, we will therefore test whether there is a participation effect of associational involvement on social resources that is conditioned by the resources people started with. That is, we examine whether people with fewer (initial) resources have more to gain from associational participation. Additionally, we pay special attention to three groups: those aged 55+, people without a partner (or, to be exact: without a partner living in the same household), and ethnic minorities. For different reasons, these groups have limited possibilities to draw social resources from other contexts, and have more to gain from associational involvement.

The data we use in our analyses stem from the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS), which is a large scale survey conducted between 2002 and 2007. Although our data are only representative for the Netherlands, we believe that our analyses have broader implications. We have no reason to expect that the creation of relationships and acquirement of social resources would not follow mechanisms that are similar across Western countries. However, the importance of voluntary association participation differs from country to country. Previous research has shown that the Netherlands belongs to a cluster of countries with high levels of participation, together with the US, Canada, and the Scandinavian countries (Curtis, et al., 2001; Pichler & Wallace, 2007). The Netherlands is therefore a good test case; if participation effects exist, one would expect them to appear most prominently in countries with high levels of voluntary association participation.

9.2 Theory and Previous Research

There are several reasons to expect a positive effect of becoming a member of a voluntary association on social resources. However, there are also arguments against it, or at least arguments that suggest that the influence of associations will be marginal. We will discuss both in this section, and subsequently discuss whether both could be true, though under different circumstances.

According to social network researchers, people generally do not make an unconstrained choice of new friends, acquaintances, or beloveds. Instead, there is a *focused choice* (Feld, 1982, 1984); people participate in certain contexts which bring certain company. People may have preferences for the kind of others they would like to become involved with, but the *foci* function as a supply side, restricting the possibilities. Acquaintances, friends, and future spouses are recruited from the contexts that people are focused on. Research has found that the (sociodemographic) composition of foci and the composition of people's immediate social circle, such as "core discussion networks" are correlated (Kalmijn & Flap, 2001; Marsden, 1990; Mollenhorst, Völker, & Flap, 2008b). That is, the composition of this group of peers reflects the composition of the foci of past participation.

Voluntary associations can be one of those social contexts, next to workplaces, neighborhoods, schools, and others (Fischer, 1982). When individuals become participant in an association they become exposed to a limited circle of fellow members who regularly get together and engage in the association's activities. In other words, through membership, voluntary associations provide meeting opportunities, or access to the network of members who are part of it.

Apart from these supply side arguments, researchers have found that participants in voluntary associations sometimes motivate their decision to join as a search for new social contacts (Prouteau & Wolff, 2008), which corresponds to the claim that associational involvement contributes to feelings of belongingness

(Rosenblum, 1998; Smith, 1975). People may be on the lookout for new or more extensive social resources, and they see membership in voluntary associations as a potential instrument to achieve this goal.

A third argument in favor of the suitability of voluntary associations to generate social resources is that the nature of the activities is distinct from other social contexts. Involvement in voluntary associations is more freely chosen than involvement in work, neighborhoods or education (cf. Rosenblum, 1998; Warren, 2001). According to Zmerli (2007), this induces self-categorization mechanisms: individuals opt for associations with members they resemble. In turn, this stimulates friendship formation. Moreover, the goals of the associations are often recreational, giving members "[...] opportunities for positive experiences with others under the 'controlled' circumstances of shared interest".

It is not self-evident that associational participation brings about (extended) social resources. For instance, McPherson et al. (1992) have shown that people's social networks within and outside voluntary associations are interlinked in several ways, but that does not necessarily indicate a participation effect. New members may interact with people they already knew within the association before they joined. If this is true, entering an association does not boost social resources, it only reaffirms the existing relationships. In other words, the causal order is reversed.

Another argument against a prominent role of associations in the creation of social resources is that contacts and interactions may remain within the associational contexts exclusively; they may not *spill over* to other contexts. The idea of spillover – crucial in many of the arguments about associational effects (e.g., Rosenblum, 1998) – states that experiences resulting from voluntary association participation can be taken along to other parts of life, or affect general dispositions (e.g., attitudes, values) which in turn affect individuals' behavior on other occasions. In the case of social resources, participation effects will be present when fellow members are also met in other contexts and/or when the contact evolves into a friendship or acquaintanceship. However, spillover effects of associational participation are not often shown in empirical research (Stolle, 2001). Moreover, social relationships often have a more flexible and temporary nature nowadays (Allan, 2008), and associational contacts may be among the more incidental and superficial contacts. As a result, entry in associations may create no or few social resources.

An argument related to the previous one, is that the importance of voluntary associations in people's everyday lives may be limited. The amount of time that is spent on associational participation is modest; other types of social participation are generally more important (Van Ingen, 2008). Since the amount of time spent with a certain other is one of the determining factors of the strength of the tie with that person (Granovetter, 1973), this would mean that associations create *weak ties* more easily than *strong ties*. Agneessens et al. (2006) show that some forms of social support are more likely to be offered by strong ties: help during sickness or financial aid, for example, are rarely provided by acquaintances or colleagues. Thus, if social

resources stem from strong ties, and contacts within associations are mainly weak ties, the relationship between associational involvement and social resources should be weak.

So far, we have presented competing claims about the effects of participation. We will first and foremost examine these claims empirically. At the same time, however, there might be a bit more to say about the relation between the arguments for and against participation effects regarding social resources. One way to make sense of the competing claims may be the idea that associational involvement only results in increased social resources if the extent of involvement is sufficient, i.e., there may be a critical amount of interaction and activity needed for the contacts to convert into relationships and resources. In the current paper, we will look at volunteering as a possible factor that satisfies this criterion. Volunteering requires greater efforts and is more costly than membership (Bekkers, et al., 2007), and "sociological convention distinguishes being an active participant in a voluntary association from volunteering" (Wilson, 2000, p. 216). As volunteers' involvement is greater, they should show stronger participation effects than ordinary members. Additionally, the nature of the activities that are performed may be different; members usually consume and volunteers usually produce collective goods (ibid.). The latter involves performing organizational and administrative tasks (Erickson & Nosanchuk, 1990), which may further (and be the result of) dedication to the association, its goal and members.

Another way to make sense of the competing claims would be to differentiate according to the need for social resources. Recently, scholars have started emphasizing the limited possibilities of generalization in voluntary association research (Fung, 2003; Stolle & Rochon, 1998; Tschirhart, 2006). They argue that questions about the circumstances of participation are important, since the existence of certain effects may be dependent on the type of association, the kind of involvement, and the kind of participants under study. Moreover, knowing more about the circumstances under which effects occur may help us track down the mechanisms that are responsible for the relationship (cf. Elster, 2007).

In the current paper, we will examine participation effects within groups that can be expected to profit more from associational participation than others. People may not always be strongly integrated into every possible context. Some do not have colleagues because they do not have a job and others are unable to rely on their neighbors because they recently moved. In these circumstances, associations can become more important contexts, compensating the lack of social resources that is caused by other factors. This argument can be applied more broadly. The value of associational involvement in generating social resources may increase when the alternatives are limited. In our analyses, we will therefore first examine whether the participation effect is dependent on the amount of social resources before entering the association. Second, three groups will be examined, with relatively limited integration in work (people aged 55+), with limited social resources in their

households (people living without a partner), and with a below-average integration in several contexts (ethnic minorities). Moreover, the first two groups may also have more time available to spend on participation in voluntary associations.

9.3 Data and Methods

The data used in this study stem from the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS), which is a two-wave, representative panel study examining family and kinship in the Netherlands (Dykstra, Kalmijn, Komter, Liefbroer, & Mulder, 2005a, 2007). The survey consisted of a (CAPI) interview and a self-completion questionnaire, and has a large sample size: 6,026 respondents participated in both waves. The first wave was conducted between 2002 and 2004. The second wave was conducted between 2005 and 2007 (3.5 years later), in which 74% of the initial sample agreed to cooperate. Examination of panel attrition revealed a significant relationship with our dependent variable. However, its effect size was modest; the correlation (point-biserial) between participation in the second wave and social resources was .087 (p =.000). One of the analyses in the paper is based on an additional migrant sample, in which the four largest migrant groups in the Netherlands (Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, and Dutch Antilleans) are oversampled. Since the number of migrants in the representative sample is low, our statistical tests will only be able to detect large effects among migrant groups in this sample; the migrant sample offers more statistical power.

Voluntary Association Participation
Our measure of associational involvement consists of (at least one) membership in: "sports associations", "religious or church associations", "a choir, drama association or music society", or "a hobby, leisure-time, or youth association". Table 9.1 (bottom) shows the transitions in associational participation and volunteering between the two waves. Our main focus is on the second category: the groups who entered an association (at least one) or started volunteering between the two waves. These groups will be compared to the non-involved.

Social Resources
Our measure of social resources is based on a five-item scale:

- There is always someone I can talk to about my day-to-day problems
- There are plenty of people I can lean on when I have problems
- There are many people I can trust completely
- There are enough people I feel close to
- I can call on my friends whenever I need them

We created a scale by calculating the mean of the scores on these items. When respondents answered less than four of the items, we assigned a missing value on the

final scale variable. The reliability of the resulting scale (Cronbach's alpha) is .80. We transposed the scale to a 0-10 range, for easier interpretation. This scale measures the extent to which people have a nearby social network they can mobilize for help and support; the items both ask about the existence of the network and about resources that can mobilized ("someone I can talk to...", "people I can lean on", and "call on my friends"). Contrary to instruments that use name generators, it is a self-perceived measure of social resources.

The five items we used are part of the De Jong-Gierveld Loneliness Scale (De Jong-Gierveld & Kamphuis, 1985; Dykstra, et al., 2005b). The scale consists of 11 items and contains an emotional and a social dimension (Van Baarsen, Snijders, Smit, & Van Duijn, 2001). The former mainly corresponds to feelings of abandonment and missed companionship; the latter – which is used here – corresponds to "social integration and embeddedness" (p. 120). The social dimension is related to (actual) network size and support (Dykstra & De Jong-Gierveld, 2004). Since the items on the social dimension are all formulated positively and loneliness only captures the negative extreme, we use the term social resources instead of loneliness or isolation.

Table 9.1
Descriptive statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Soc resources T1	6,367	0	10	7.92	2.37
Soc resources T2	6,304	0	10	7.72	2.40
Education (T1)	6,670	5	20	12.01	3.20
Women (T1)	6,744	0	1	0.59	0.49
Employed (T1)	6,744	0	1	0.64	0.48
Age (T1)	6,735	18	79	45.90	14.43
Single (single person hh or single parent; T1)	6,744	0	1	0.29	0.46
Living with parents (T1)	6,744	0	1	0.03	0.17
Has children (T1)	6,744	0	1	0.71	0.45
Health (self-rated; T1)	6,743	1	5	4.03	0.80
Church attendance (≥ once a month; T1)	5,749	0	1	0.20	0.40

Transition variables (%)	I	II	III	IV
Membership transitions	27 (stayed un-involved)	13 (entry between T1-T2)	49 (stayed involved)	12 (exit between T1-T2)
Volunteering transitions	49 (stayed un-involved)	12 (started between T1-T2)	27 (stayed involved)	12 (quit between T1-T2)
Valid N (listwise)	5,219			

Other Variables

To control for other contexts from which respondents derive social resources, we included education, having a job, life-cycle, and religiosity in our models. Education was measured as years of schooling, ranging from 5 to 20 years. The variable "currently employed" is a dummy variable which indicates having a job versus all other possibilities. Life-cycle is a nominal variable, which captures six categories: living with parents, single person, couple without children, couple with children, single parent, and other households. Additionally, gender and age were included in our models as controls. The latter consisted of a linear and a quadratic component to capture the possible rapid decline in social resources at old age. We added an interaction effect between gender and having a job, to account for possible differences in the resources men and women acquire from their work.

Analytical Strategy

We opted for an analytical strategy which has been used in studies in other fields, e.g., on effects of marriage (e.g., Horwitz, White, & Howell-White, 1996; Simon, 2002). We examine participation effects by comparing respondents who entered between the two waves (who were participating at T2 and not participating at T1) with respondents without any participation. In our analyses, we regress social resources (T2) on a dummy variable indicating this *entry* and on previous social resources (T1). In other words, we analyze how much the group that entered an association grew in social resources compared to the group that remained uninvolved. Changes in the number of memberships are not tested (we test the change from 0 at T1 to 1, 2, 3, or 4 memberships at T2). Separate tests showed that the transition from no to at least one membership is by far the most important difference.

The respondents who entered an organization between the waves had been a member for 1.75 years on average by the time of the second wave. This is a relatively short period, which means that chances are low that transitions occur in between (e.g., that people exit one association and enter another, which would appear in the data as staying involved). The period in which people stay involved can obviously be longer, e.g., McPherson et al. (1992) mention an average of six years of membership in their analyses of retrospective data. Although the exact numbers are not precisely known, it is clear that our analyses should be interpreted as mainly capturing the short term effect of participation (ranging between 0 and 3.5 years of *exposure* to the *participation treatment*).

9.4 Results

Table 9.2 gives the results of the analyses which address possible participation effects as a result of membership, or the growth of social resources that occurs after

entering an association. As argued in the methods section, this requires controlling for differences in social resources (between the entry and uninvolved groups) at T1, which is done in the second model. This means that model I, without controls for selection, is misspecified. We do show this model, however, as it gives an indication of the correlation that could have been found using cross-sectional data.

Table 9.2
Regression of social resources T2 on entry in voluntary associations and volunteering, social resources T1, and control variables T1 (OLS; unstandardized coefficients)

	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV
Entry	0.257*	0.113	0.107	0.588
	(0.125)	(0.103)	(0.106)	(0.418)
Social resources T1		0.626**	0.606**	0.624**
		(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.027)
Education			0.006	0.007
			(0.018)	(0.018)
Women			0.068	0.056
			(0.192)	(0.192)
Employed			-0.050	-0.070
			(0.199)	(0.200)
Women x employed			0.437*	0.449*
			(0.220)	(0.221)
Age			-0.007	-0.007
			(0.025)	(0.025)
Age^2			0.000	0.000
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Single			-0.123	-0.129
			(0.114)	(0.114)
Living with parents			-0.685*	-0.684*
			(0.323)	(0.322)
Has children			-0.108	-0.105
			(0.116)	(0.116)
Health			0.059	0.058
			(0.068)	(0.068)
Church attendance			0.014	0.019
			(0.141)	(0.141)
Entry x Social res T1				-0.061
				(0.048)
R^2	0.002	0.374	0.386	0.387
N	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804

Note. The numbers between brackets are (robust) standard errors.
*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

As can be seen comparing models I and II, the difference between those who entered and those who remained uninvolved is much smaller and no longer significant after controlling for selection effects. Social resources in the first wave had a significant influence on social resources in the second wave (the standardized coefficient is 0.34). Additionally, we controlled for other factors that may disturb the entry effect

(model III). However, entering these control variables does not substantially alter the entry effect. We thus conclude against a participation effect; people who become a member of a voluntary association do not gain more social resources than those who remain uninvolved.

Note that the coefficients of gender and employment in model III – as a result of the interaction gender x employed – are not the main effects of gender and employment; without the interaction, women showed larger growth in social resources than men ($\beta = 0.390$; $p = .000$) and respondents with a job showed a (weakly significant) larger growth than those without a job ($\beta = 0.248$; $p = .065$). The interaction effect indicates that the growth is larger when the two conditions are combined (for employed women). Furthermore, we found that respondents who were still living with their parents gained less social resources than those not living with their parents. The other variables in the model did not show significant effects.

In the fourth model, we examined whether participation effects are conditioned on initial levels of social resources, or whether people with few social resources have more to gain from participation than those with abundant resources, by adding an interaction term. Although the direction of the interaction is as expected (negative), it is not significant. Therefore, we have to reject the idea that the effect of entering an association is larger when people have fewer initial social resources. In addition to this linear interaction, we examined the possibility of non-linear interactions, by running separate regressions for every decile in the distribution of social resources on T1. This confirmed our expectation that the interaction was not linear; the entry effect is considerably larger in the lower deciles, but non-existing in the higher deciles. The participation effect in the first decile, among the ones with very few social resources, was the largest ($\beta = 0.906$; $p = .020$).

In Table 9.3 we examine a stronger form of participation, i.e., volunteering. The participation effect of volunteering turns out to be significant: those who started volunteering gained more social resources than those who remained uninvolved. We can also consider the magnitude of the effect. To do this, we calculate an effect size, i.e., the dummy effect of entering (X) divided by the standard deviation of the social resources (Y). The effect size turns out to be 0.08, which is small.

Additionally, we expected that the volunteering effect would be greater than the membership effect in hypothesis 3. There is no straightforward manner to test this formally (the membership and volunteering analyses are based on different subsamples). Nevertheless, we can compare the 95% confidence intervals around the two effects. They range from -.101 to .314 for membership and from .011 to .375 for volunteering. In view of this large overlap, we cannot conclude that the volunteering effect is larger.

Similar to model II, we added an interaction term to the volunteering model to see whether the effect of entry would be larger among people with low initial levels of social resources. However, as model IV shows, the interaction effect was not significant.

Table 9.3
Regression of social resources T2 on volunteering, social resources T1, and control variables T1 (OLS; unstandardized coefficients)

	Model I	Model II
Entry	0.193*	0.605
	(0.093)	(0.429)
Social resources T1	0.580**	0.589**
	(0.019)	(0.021)
Education	0.010	0.010
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Women	0.125	0.130
	(0.162)	(0.162)
Employed	0.056	0.063
	(0.165)	(0.165)
Women x employed	0.247	0.239
	(0.179)	(0.179)
Age	0.007	0.008
	(0.021)	(0.021)
Age^2	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Single	-0.152	-0.151
	(0.090)	(0.090)
Living with parents	0.009	0.016
	(0.243)	(0.242)
Has children	-0.071	-0.071
	(0.094)	(0.094)
Health	0.099~	0.101~
	(0.053)	(0.053)
Church attendance	0.030	0.035
	(0.140)	(0.140)
Entry x Social res T1	-	-0.052
		(0.048)
R^2	0.355	0.355
N	2,961	2,961

Note. The numbers between brackets are (robust) standard errors.
*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

In Table 9.4, we examined whether groups that lack social resources from other contexts show participation effects. First, we took a subsample of respondents aged 55 or older. The models we tested were similar to model I in Table 9.2; they include social resources at T1 and control variables. Among the elderly, those entered an association gained more social resources than those who remained uninvolved. However, this effect was weakly significant. The effect size is still modest for this group (0.14).

Table 9.4
Regression of social resources T2 on entry in voluntary associations, control variables, and social resources T1, for three different groups (OLS; unstandardized coefficients)

Age	18-54 years	55+ years	Test of difference
Entry	0.048	0.331~	p = .145
	(0.125)	(0.197)	
Social resources T1	0.613**	0.583**	
	(0.027)	(0.042)	
Control variables	V	v	
R^2	.375	.418	
N	1,342	462	

Having a partner	Yes	No	Test of difference
Entry	0.040	0.347~	p = .236
	(0.123)	(0.189)	
Social resources T1	0.596**	0.632**	
	(0.028)	(0.039)	
Control variables	v	v	
R^2	.357	.458	
N	1,259	555	

Ethnicity	Native Dutch	Ethnic minorities	Test of difference
Entry	0.051	0.546*	p = .052
	(0.102)	(0.255)	
Social resources T1	0.608**	0.348**	
	(0.020)	(0.040)	
Control variables	v	v	
R^2	.400	.166	
N	1,659	542	

Note. The numbers between brackets are (robust) standard errors. Control variables are similar to those in Table 9.2, with exclusion of the life course variables in the model with/ without a partner, and exclusion of church attendance in the native Dutch/ Ehtnic minorities model.
*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

The final column in Table 9.4 tests the difference between the effects among the two age groups. This difference was not significant (p = .15). Next, we examined the participation effect for people without a partner (in the same household). The controlled participation effect for this group is weakly significant. However, the difference in the effect for people with and without a partner was not significant (p = .24). The bottom panel of Table 9.4 shows the results for ethnic minorities versus the native Dutch. The former showed a significant, positive effect of associational involvement on social resources, and the effect is relatively strong (effect size of 0.23). The difference between the native Dutch and ethnic minorities was marginally significant (p = .05).

9.5 Discussion and Conclusions

The results of the preceding analyses have shown that we need to be skeptical about the effects of associational involvement on social resources: once selection effects were taken into account, we did not find a general membership effect on social resources and the effect of volunteering was small. This subscribes to the more pessimistic views on voluntary associations; they may take up a part of everyday life that is too small to be of significance or associational involvement does not have an influence on other domains. In other words, in the case of social resources the spillover mechanism – which is central to many ideas about participation effects – does not seem to be very strong.

To get some idea about the validity of our conclusions, we can compare our results to a survey that was conducted in the Netherlands in which people were asked directly about social contacts resulting from associational involvement. Mollenhorst et al. (2008b) examined where people got to know each other, and reported that 10% of the Dutch population first met his/ her partner in a club or association. Furthermore, respondents reported that they first met 14% of their friends and 10% of their acquaintances in an association. In other words, when using this different method, small effects are found as well. Possibly, our analyses would have shown significant participation effects if our sample size was larger, but the magnitude of the effects would not be different. It is likely, however, that a longer period between our two measurements would have resulted in larger effects, given the fact that social resources mainly result from relatively strong ties, which need time to develop.

One of the reasons for the non-significant or small participation effects may be lack of multiplexity in the relationships with fellow members. As long as people rush home after the weekly game of soccer, their fellow members will not contribute, or contribute very little to their social resources. This is in line with what was found by Crossley (2008a) analyzing the development of interpersonal relationships in a health club: friendships between members were strongly encouraged when there were additionally meetings on the street, in the nearby bar, or at an occasional dinner in a restaurant. Without this multiplexity, the ties with fellow members may be too weak to result in (additional) social resources. This does not mean that these contacts are irrelevant, however. Weak ties may provide valuable information, e.g., about job opportunities (Granovetter, 1974). Furthermore, since these weak ties are more often bridging (that is, consisting of relationships with dissimilar others), they may enhance people's abilities to interact with others from different backgrounds, spanning differences in language and customs (cf. Lichterman, 2005; Putnam, 2000). Additionally, Mutz (2006) argued that contacts with dissimilar others (with opposite political views) are important for the creation of tolerance. In other words, while our analyses indicate that

associational involvement does not seem to have strong bonding effects, it may still encourage bridging contacts.

Apart from the participation effects we studied, one may also wonder to what extent selection effects exist in the relation between social resources and associational participation. By way of exploration, we analyzed whether reversal of the causation in our entry model would lead to significant results. In our view, if the selection effect is the result of a recruitment mechanism, a higher amount of social resources at T1 should increase the chance of joining an association between T1 and T2 (this means that the selection effect is conceptually different from the participation effect, in which a change in membership status should cause a change in social resources). Without control variables there was a marginally significant effect, but this disappeared after entering sociodemographic characteristics. Theoretically, it is also unclear why such an effect would occur. There is well-know recruitment hypothesis in research on voluntary associations (Bekkers, et al., 2007; Tschirhart, 2006; Verba, et al., 1995), but this mainly stems from the fact that volunteers are often asked to participate, and that new members often already know someone "inside". Although some researchers have extended this reasoning to network size (McPherson, et al., 1992), in our view this seems a long way from our concepts of social resources (which emphasizes being able to trust and rely on the people in one's nearby social network).

Although participation effects in the general population seem to be small or non-significant, we did find evidence for membership effects in groups that have fewer social resources from other domains. People above 55 years of age, without a partner, and from immigrant groups showed positive and significant participation effects. Since the possibilities in other domains are limited, voluntary association participation may become a more important means for acquiring social resources. Moreover, these groups have more to gain. Most respondents in our sample reported having sufficient social resources, and it seems reasonable to expect that once people have acquired those resources they remain quite stable. Our results therefore subscribe to Tschirhart's (2006) conclusion that the generalizability of findings in voluntary association research is often low, but – from a more optimistic viewpoint – also indicate that if participation effects are lacking in general, there may still be effects under certain circumstances or among certain groups. In our view, it would be interesting to explore more of these circumstances and contexts of associational participation.

Taken together, we hope that this paper will inspire researchers to conduct more panel studies and to be more precise in specifying participation and selection effects (and their accompanying mechanisms). This will help to distinguish between fact and fiction regarding the effects of voluntary association participation in the future.

10. Summary and Conclusions

In the preceding empirical chapters, I have attempted to contribute to the current debate about voluntary association participation in sociology and political science. These chapters provided information about shifts in voluntary association participation and the driving forces behind those shifts, raised questions regarding causality and generalizability, and addressed several causes and consequences of associational participation. The sections below provide a summary of the findings from the empirical chapters, followed by answers to the three research questions of this dissertation (sections 10.2 to 10.4). I conclude by proposing a number of ideas for future research (10.5).

10.1 Findings from Seven Empirical Chapters[1]

In *Chapter 3*, trends in social participation in the Netherlands between 1975 and 2000 were analyzed, distinguishing between period, life-cycle and cohort effects. This was followed by an examination of the causes of these changes. Use of diary data enabled an assessment of four types of social participation: formal participation (associational activities and volunteering), informal sociability within the home (primarily visiting and receiving visitors), informal sociability in public (or semi-public) places, and distant social contacts. Two period effects were found. First, a large decrease was found in the time people spent on social activities within the home (approximately three hours per week between 1980 and 2000). This trend is associated with increases in the time spent at work and watching television, as well as with increases in the average level of education. Second, the data reveal a slight increase in time spent on distant social contacts. Two other trends manifested themselves as cohort differences. First, younger cohorts were considerably less involved in voluntary associations than were older cohorts, a difference that is partly explained by their lower levels of religiosity. Second, younger cohorts spent more time on informal social activities outside the home. This was also related to decreasing levels of religiosity (which is negatively correlated with sociability in public places). Surprisingly, we also found a positive, indirect relationship with time spent watching television; younger cohorts watch less television, which is negatively correlated to sociability outside the home.[2]

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[1] These summaries are extended versions of the journal abstracts that can be found on the first page of each chapter.

[2] The total indirect effect (the product of two negative paths) is therefore positive. Note, however, that younger cohorts spend considerably more time at their computers.

Chapter 4 examined the individualization and informalization[3] hypotheses. These hypotheses argue that people are increasingly choosing to perform their activities in individual and informal group contexts instead of in the context of voluntary associations. We argued that more demanding structural constraints and changed preferences are likely to be responsible for these changes. Based on analyses of leisure activities in the Netherlands between 1975 and 2005, we found that the choice for a leisure context is dependent on education, gender, year of birth, age, and time pressure. We found evidence for informalization, but – contrary to popular beliefs – not for individualization. The informalization trend follows a pattern of cohort replacement, and is also caused by a rise in the average educational level in the population. In absolute numbers, leisure activities in voluntary associations remained on the same level. These trends were most marked in the field of sports.

In *Chapter 5*, the association of leisure activities and civic engagement with helping was examined. To this end, we used data from the British Time Use Survey in 2000.[4] The analysis focused on two dimensions. First, the company at the leisure activities was analyzed. We hypothesized that activities alone or in the limited circle of household members should not influence our social capital indicators, whereas activities in the broader social circle of companions should influence them positively. Second, we considered the nature of the activities, hypothesizing that productive activities (i.e., pastimes in which people are active, "creating" or "doing things," and working on common goals) would be positively associated with civic engagement and helping, whereas consumptive activities (i.e., passive activities, in which people are mere spectators, undergoing experiences, or utilizing goods) would not. Our findings indicate a positive association between productive activities and the social capital indicators of civic engagement and helping. Although we refrain from making claims of causality, a possible explanation for this finding could be that this kind of "serious leisure" enhances the skills of individuals. Contrary to our expectations, time spent on consumptive leisure activities are negatively related to both civic engagement and helping (instead of non-related). In general, the type of activity was more important than the type of company with whom the activities were performed. We also found that leisure activities are particularly likely to advance civic engagement and helping among groups that were already more inclined to do so than others.

In *Chapter 6*, we found considerable changes in the determinants of volunteering between 1975 and 2005 in the Netherlands. Educational expansion,

[3] Chapters 3 and 4 examine two different kinds of informalization; Chapter 3 examines the exchange of associational activities for other social activities (e.g., visiting and receiving visitors), and Chapter 4 examines the exchange of associational activities for similar activities but in a different context (e.g., playing soccer with friends instead of in a club).

[4] At the time of writing, there were no Dutch time-use data that also included measurement of association.

secularization, changes on the job market, and other social processes affect both the average level of volunteering and the distribution of volunteering. We found that volunteering has become more common among the economically inactive (retirees and homemakers), at the expense of the employed. A shift in resources seems to have occurred; the retirees in the 2005 data were healthier, wealthier, and more eager to spend their time productively than were their counterparts in the 1975 data, whereas employed people must now cope with increased responsibilities and time pressure. This correlates with age: volunteering is becoming associated with later stages in the life course, at the expense of earlier stages. Furthermore, the relation between church attendance and volunteering has become stronger; although volunteering has decreased within the general population, churchgoers have increased their volunteering. This finding applies only to volunteering for religious organizations, thereby suggesting an intuitive explanation: for religious organizations to maintain their level of service provision in times of a shrinking pool of potential volunteers, the average churchgoer must contribute more than before. The role of education has also changed; differences between those with lower and higher levels of education with regard to their inclination to volunteer have virtually disappeared, and those with less education have increased their time investment considerably. In other words, education seems to have become less important as a predictor of volunteering, which is in line with findings from cross-national research.

The second aim of the sixth chapter was to examine how sociodemographic characteristics relate differently to participation and time investment in volunteering. All of the socio-demographic characteristics that were examined influenced selection into volunteering, with the exception of having a partner. The well-known determinants, however, offer hardly any explanation for time investment. Instead, the duration of volunteering is determined mostly by restrictions of employment and the presence of children (particularly young children). In other words, socio-demographic characteristics often relate differently to participation and time investment; in some cases, they even have opposite effects (e.g., the presence of children stimulates volunteering by the parents but restricts the number of hours they work). The determinants of the duration of volunteering have changed less than the determinants of participation.

Chapter 7 examined the determinants of voluntary association participation from a cross-national perspective. In line with previous research, we found substantial differences regarding education, income, and gender. We also found considerable variation in the sizes of these effects across countries and organizations. Religious organizations showed the least participatory inequality; contrary to our expectations, leisure associations did not differ much from other kinds of associations in terms of participatory inequality. We subsequently considered macro-level factors that influence participation, with particular attention to welfare-state expenditures. We argued that it is important to consider both the

conditioning and the crowding-out effects of welfare states. Our findings regarding the effects of welfare-state expenditures on the average levels of participation were ambiguous; we found crowding-in effects in Northern and Western Europe, while we found evidence of crowding-out outside this region. Our analyses further indicated that extensive welfare-state expenditures reduce participatory inequalities; in stronger welfare states, voluntary association participation is less dependent on gender, education, and income. The redistribution of resources might play a role in this regard, as the opportunities of the less privileged are enhanced by welfare-state arrangements,[5] which lift part of the restrictions they face when seeking to become involved.

The topic of *Chapter 8* was the "schools of democracy" hypothesis, or the idea that involvement in voluntary associations stimulates political interest and action. Face-to-face contact with fellow members supposedly induces civic mindedness – the propensity to think and care more about the wider world. This line of reasoning further proposes that civic skills and political efficacy are likely to be enhanced through involvement in collective activities, the organization of meetings, and cooperation and discussions with others. In turn, these enhanced civic skills and values are expected to increase the likelihood of political activity among voluntary association members. We tested "neo-Tocquevillian" arguments in cross-sectional, hierarchical analyses of seventeen European countries. The results revealed positive correlations between associational involvement and political action, and these correlations were positive in all countries under study. Nonetheless, the more informative hypotheses were falsified. First, the correlation is stronger for interest and activist organizations than it was for leisure organizations. Second, passive members show much higher levels of political action than do the non-involved, indicating selection effects. Additional effects of active participation in leisure organizations are marginal. Third, civic skills and civic-mindedness explain hardly any of the correlation between associational involvement and political action. In summary, we found little evidence for a participation effect on political action. We must therefore conclude that the mechanism of political socialization plays a marginal role at best. Instead, our findings support the idea that selection effects account for a large part of the correlation between associational involvement and political action.

Chapter 9 examined whether participation in voluntary associations enhances the social resources of members (operationalized roughly as the extent to which people have close social networks on which they can rely). Conflicting arguments exist in the literature with regard to participation effects on self-perceived social resources. We argued that it is necessary to analyze panel data in order to examine this type of question, as it presumes causality: a change in participation status

[5] Such arrangements can be either generic or directly aimed at associational participation, as in the case of subsidies on memberships for the poor.

(becoming a member) is expected to be related to a change (growth) in social resources. To test the participation effect, we compared two groups: those who had became members of associations between two waves of measurement and those who had remained uninvolved. In line with the more skeptical ideas about voluntary associations, we found no general participation effect. It could be associational contacts are not extended outside the organization (contrary to the notion that associational participation has spillover effects), or the time spent on associational activities is too limited to have substantial effects. Our analysis of volunteering, however, showed a small positive effect; those who started volunteering showed a growth in social resources compared to those who remained uninvolved. Similarly, we found that participation effects may arise within certain groups (e.g., the elderly), people without a partner, and immigrants. This may be explained by the fact that these groups have fewer opportunities to acquire social resources in other domains.

10.2 Shifts in Voluntary Association Involvement

In the introductory chapter, I stated that an important part of the current discussion about voluntary association participation revolves around issues concerning the decline of community. Although providing an exhaustive description of the trends in the Netherlands was not the primary aim of this dissertation,[6] the analyses in the preceding chapters do contribute to the information about the current state of associational participation. Moreover, this dissertation has examined the relationships between voluntary association participation and related domains (in the private sphere). As stated in the introduction, the research question that guided this part of the dissertation was formulated as follows:
How has voluntary association participation developed since 1975, and how are these developments associated with trends in related social contexts?

As argued in Chapter 2, it is more important to consider active types of participation in voluntary associations (e.g., volunteering) than to consider aggregate participation numbers. Based on data from the DTUS, a decrease in associational activities and volunteering can be observed in the Netherlands roughly starting in 1990.[7] This decline was partly caused by cohort replacement: each cohort born after World War

[6] Good overviews on trends in associational involvement in the Netherlands over the past decades have already been provided, most of them in the publications of the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (De Hart, 2005; Dekker, et al., 2007; Van den Berg & De Hart, 2008).
[7] This result is based on modelling the trends in a linear or curvilinear fashion. This is the best way of looking at these data, as the indicators from the 1995 wave are outliers on several dimensions, and there are indications that these data are less reliable (Van Ingen, et al., 2009).

II has been less involved in these activities. The Appendix provides an extended overview of the aggregate trends, including data from the 2005 survey (Table A10.1). Although these data were not yet available at the writing of Chapter 3, the table shows that the inclusion of 2005 causes no discontinuities in the trends. The decrease corresponds to declining active participation in other countries (Chapter 2). Our analyses also indicate that the decline in volunteering reflects a decrease in the inclination to volunteer rather than a decrease in the time spent performing volunteer work.

Another indicator of the decline of community that we examined is participation in leisure associations. Findings from previous research suggest that this type of participation has increased in the Netherlands (De Hart, 2005), a finding that was taken one of several indications that contradict Putnam's bowling-alone thesis (Halpern, 2005). When assessing this trend, however, we should also consider the increase that has occurred in the total number of leisure activities. Following the detailed examination of the social context of leisure activities (Chapter 4), including the distinction between associational, informal, and individual activities, we can refine these conclusions. This more sophisticated framework shows much stability in the level of participation in leisure associations: the proportion of leisure activities that is performed in voluntary associations remained the same throughout the years. Additionally, we found that the share of leisure activities in informal groups has increased (as discussed below). As a result, the share of individual activities has become slightly smaller. In other words, with regard to leisure activities in the Netherlands, there are no signs of individualization.

In addition to the challenges associated with finding reliable and comparable indicators, one of the main challenges involved in the study of changes on the associational market involves finding a way to analyze possible alternatives of "classical" associational membership and active involvement. If people are not participating in voluntary associations, they have not necessarily withdrawn from social participation completely, spending their days inside their homes in front of their televisions. There are many other forms of social interaction. As stated by Stolle and Rochon (1998):

Although social capital may be fostered by a variety of formal and informal interactions between members of society, the full range of these interactions is not observable. What we can observe is the prevalence of memberships in voluntary organizations in a given society. As a result, associational memberships have become the indicator of choice for examining the rate of formation or destruction of social capital (p. 48).

I have argued that there may be theoretical reasons to expect a special role for voluntary associations (Chapter 2), although this would not mean that other kinds of social participation cannot have similar functions. It is important to consider alternatives when studying trends in associational involvement. Other kinds of social participation (which are situated more in the private sphere than they are in civil

society; see Figure 1.1) may be among those alternatives. Halpern (2005) is one of the scholars who suggested that associational activities may have been replaced by informal ways of maintaining social contacts over time. For this reason, trends in four types of social participation were examined in Chapter 3. The results indicated that informal sociability had not increased. On the contrary, informal sociability indoors (mainly visiting and receiving visitors) had declined substantially, while sociability in public (and semi-public) settings (time spent in bars, restaurants, at parties and receptions) remained stable. The only kind of social participation that has increased is distant communication. In other words, the results reveal no evidence of a transition from associational involvement to informal sociability in the Netherlands. It is possible, however, that a transition from associational involvement to distant communication has taken place to some extent.

We did find evidence for informalization of another kind. In contrast to the previous paragraph, the shift does not refer to a change in the kind of activities, but to a change in the context of activities. Between 1975 and 2005, the share of leisure activities performed in informal groups grew. This informalization was most marked in the field of sports. We found that people increasingly prefer sports with an inherently informal or individual character, and also that people increasingly choose an informal context when a sport can be practiced in the context of both associations and informal groups. Unfortunately, we had no information about the nature or the composition of these informal groups, although recent qualitative research indicates that informal sports groups may share many characteristics with formal sports clubs: synchronous rhythms are important, people derive a sense of identity and belonging from these groups, they are helpful for counseling and acquiring information, and they sometimes result in collective action (Crossley, 2008a).

The results in Chapters 3 and 4 showed that cohort differences can explain part of the patterns in social participation. Although cohort explanations (cf. Putnam, 2000) have limited substantive meaning (immediately raising the question of why cohorts differ), the analysis of cohort differences can be helpful when predicting future developments.[8] We found that younger cohorts are less inclined to volunteer than are older cohorts. This does not mean, however, that their overall level of social participation is lower; we also found that younger cohorts spend more time on sociability in public and semi-public places (e.g., parties, bars, and restaurants).[9] Moreover, other studies have indicated that young people spend considerably more time on the internet than older people do, and that maintaining social contacts is a more important aspect of their internet use (De Haan & Huysmans, 2006). According to figures published by De Haan and Huysmans (2006), people aged 12-19 years spend roughly 47% of their computer time on social activities (4.0 out of

[8] And additionally, cohorts can be used to examine longitudinal changes based on pooled cross-sectional data (for which some kind of aggregation is needed).
[9] This remains true after controlling for life course differences.

8.5 hours per week; activities include e-mail, MSN, and chat), while the average in the population was 29% (own calculations). Corresponding to these tendencies, we conclude that younger cohorts choose the context of informal groups for their leisure activities more frequently than do older cohorts.

We also examined the possibility of relationships between behavior in the private sphere and in civil society (Chapter 5; see Figure 1.1) by analyzing whether certain kinds of leisure activities and certain kinds of company at those activities promote volunteering. This can also be interpreted as an investigation of relationships between formal and informal social participation, as discussed in Chapter 3. Our results showed no evidence to support the neo-Tocquevillian argument of a "social spiral" (cf. Lichterman, 2005). The results also did not support the notion that participation in wider social circles makes people more understanding and caring, which is likely to increase their civic activity. We did find a relationship with the type of leisure activities, however, with productive leisure activities correlating positively with civic activity. Although we would like to postpone conclusion about causality until we have panel data at our disposal, it appears that such "serious leisure" (Stebbins, 1992) may increase people's civic and social skills, which are important determinants of civic activity.

In summary, although previous publications have shown that aggregate indicators of participation in the Netherlands have remained quite stable in recent decades, closer inspection reveals several important changes. Active participation in voluntary associations and volunteering has decreased somewhat, due to cohort replacement. Instead of decreased social participation, however, younger cohorts display different patterns of social participation; they interact in public places more frequently, and they are more inclined to maintain their social contacts by telephone or through the internet. Given the process of cohort replacement, these trends are likely to persist, meaning that the level of civic activity may become problematic in the upcoming decades. This trend may be partially counterbalanced, however, by increases in informal group activity.

10.3 Determinants of Participation, Driving Forces of Change, and Selection

The aim of this dissertation was not to reconfirm the extensive information about determinants of voluntary association participation that is already known from previous research. Instead, we examined the extent to which these determinants have changed, as well as the ways in which individual-level determinants interact with country characteristics. The overarching research question for the two chapters discussed in this section (Chapters 6 and 7) was as follows:
To what extent do the determinants of voluntary association participation vary over time and across countries, and how is the welfare state related to the latter?

Previous research has stressed the importance of changes in religiosity and educational attainment as driving forces behind changes in voluntary association participation. This is confirmed by the findings of this dissertation, although the influence is apparently less straightforward than previously assumed.

Religiosity and volunteering are related; we found that the inclination to volunteer increases with the level of religiosity. When considering people who do volunteer, however, the number of hours that they volunteer is not dependent on religiosity. Given this relationship, the decrease in religiosity that has been observed in the Netherlands in recent decades should have resulted in a considerable decline in volunteering (and perhaps a further decline in the future). This decline has been modest, however, and not in proportion to the trend of decreasing religiosity. The analyses in one of the previous chapters provide a partial explanation for this pattern. We found that the effect of religiosity on volunteering increased simultaneously with the decrease in religiosity. As a result of secularization, the pool of potential volunteers in churches becomes smaller. For religious organizations to maintain their level of service provision in times of a shrinking pool of potential volunteers, the average churchgoer must contribute more than before. Our findings are in line with this explanation, as the increasing difference in volunteering between churchgoers and non-churchgoers is the result of the persistence in religious volunteering.

Our analyses also showed that – in addition to its negative influence on associational involvement – declining religiosity has a positive influence on another kind of social participation: sociability in public and semi-public places. Visits to receptions, parties, restaurants, bars, clubs, and similar places are negatively correlated to religiosity. The values of people with strong religious beliefs are probably inconsistent with the hedonistic connotations of this kind of social participation, especially among Protestants. This implies that religious and non-religious people have different patterns of social participation. The combination of less religiosity and volunteering with more public sociability (and possibly also more social interaction through the internet) can typically be observed among younger cohorts. The consequences of these trends are not immediately clear; each type of social participation may have its own advantages and disadvantages. Associational activities and volunteering by churchgoers may help to produce collective goods (although the "collective" in this sense may well be a restricted group), whereas the public social participation by non-churchgoers may help to establish social contacts among people with diverse backgrounds (although it will produce few collective goods).

The analyses in this dissertation reconfirmed the strong relation between education and voluntary association participation that is often found in research, although our results also indicated that there is more to the story. As a consequence of educational expansion, we would expect increased associational activity. Contrary to this expectation, our analyses showed that educational expansion has only a slight

effect on volunteering, and this effect was far smaller than the negative influence of (decreasing) religiosity. Again, this can be partly explained by changed effect sizes. We found that the difference between those with lower and higher levels of education with regard to their inclination to volunteer diminished between 1975 and 2005. As a result of this changed effect size, the increase in voluntary association participation is less than expected.

Our analyses showed further that highly educated people are more likely to be involved in informal groups, whereas those with less education choose individual leisure activities more frequently. The size of social networks and the quality of social skills are likely to play a role here. Given these larger networks, it also makes sense that more highly educated people would spend more time maintaining distant social contacts through writing, telephone calls, and e-mail (and other internet applications). There is, however, one exception to positive correlation between education and social behavior: education is negatively correlated with sociability within the home. People with less education spend more time visiting and receiving visitors. In summary, educational expansion is likely to affect the state of the associational market, although its influence is less straightforward than previously expected.

There are obviously additional factors that change social participation preferences. Increased time pressure and fragmentation are two that are worth mentioning. Decreases in sociability within the home are associated with increases in working hours. We also found a positive correlation between time problems and preference for individual or informal group activities over activities in voluntary associations. In another finding, volunteering is increasingly associated with the retirement stage of the life course and with being economically inactive (retirees and homemakers). In summary, these findings seem to indicate that time problems, which are probably due to increasing demands of employment and household tasks, are partly responsible for changing demands on the associational market. Facing time pressure, problems in planning activities with others, or fragmentation of time encourages people to perform activities in individual and informal group settings rather than in voluntary associations, which generally have activities of fixed length and at set times.

Our current knowledge of macro-level factors that determine associational involvement is quite limited, and we know even less about the interrelationships between macro and micro-level factors. In Chapter 7, we tried to contribute to this literature by examining the influence of welfare state arrangements on associational participation. Previous studies focus mainly on the *crowding-out hypothesis* (e.g., Van Oorschot & Arts, 2005), and centered on the question of whether welfare-state arrangements are positively or negatively related to social capital. We addressed this question as well, and we found that the direction of any significant crowding-in or crowding-out effects was dependent on region. We found a positive relationship between welfare-state expenditures and associational involvement in Western and

Central Europe, although we found evidence of an opposite relationship outside this region. We further found that welfare-state expenditures reduced participatory inequalities, and we argued that part of the explanation could be the process of resource redistribution in welfare states. Such redistribution is likely to improve the position of the less privileged, providing them with more resources, which are required to become involved. Welfare-state expenditures thus have a leveling effect on participatory inequality, indicating that government measures can reduce the *problem of selection.*[10]

In summary, the way in which voluntary association participation is determined is less clear-cut than previously assumed. The influence of religiosity and education on participation trends is complex. Secularization discourages volunteering; somewhat counter-intuitively, however, religious organizations may maintain much of their activity, as participation in volunteer work increases among churchgoers. Simultaneously, secularization may encourage other, more informal kinds of social participation. Educational expansion did not result in a upward trend in voluntary association participation. Our analyses suggested two reasons for this: the differences between those with higher and lower levels of education have diminished, and the more highly educated are also the ones who are most inclined to choose informal alternatives for voluntary associations. Finally, our analyses have shown that the determinants of associational involvement are interwoven with the institutional setting of that participation, and that they vary considerably according to the wealth, democratic traditions, and welfare-state arrangements of countries.

10.4 Effects of Voluntary Association Participation and Causality

In Chapters 8 and 9 of this dissertation, we examined two of the presumed internal effects of voluntary associations (which refer to the side-effects or benefits of the associational experiences for the participants involved): political socialization and social resources. These outcomes differ in several ways. Political socialization has been documented extensively, appeals mostly to political scientists, and has more "dignified" connotations than does the topic of social resources. The latter has not been researched extensively in relation to associational involvement, appeals more to sociologists, and has a more everyday character. The over-arching research question in this part of the dissertation was as follows:
To what extent are participants' social resources and political activity enhanced as a result of their associational participation?

[10] As discussed in Chapters 2 and 7, participatory inequality threatens democratic ideals only when the less privileged have fewer opportunities to become involved, and not when certain groups choose to be uninvolved.

One of the main challenges in these kinds of analyses involves issues of causality. Theoretically, the relations between voluntary association participation and its presumed "consequences" may just as well be the result of selection effects. Depending on the kind of data available and the information provided by previous research, three strategies were employed to gain knowledge about the (causal) relations between associational involvement and connected dispositions or behavior.[11]

First, correlations can be examined in cross-sectional research. In some cases, we do not know whether these correlations exist. For example, in Chapter 5, we explored the association of the nature and social setting of leisure activities with civic engagement. Although we refrained from drawing conclusions about causal order, we gained basic knowledge about the activities that were related to civic engagement and those that were not. In general, this strategy is probably most informative when relationships prove non-existent.[12]

Second, theoretical arguments can be combined with cross-sectional data, resulting in "quasi-causal"[13] analysis. In Chapter 8, we examined the validity of the political-socialization idea of voluntary associations. The proposed mechanisms placed associational participation at the beginning of the causal chain and political interest and action at the end (and arguments for the reverse order are lacking). This enabled us to formulate cross-sectional hypotheses with a quasi-causal character. We argued that, if the political-socialization idea is correct, the largest differences should occur between active members/ volunteers and passive/ non-members. Moreover, this relationship was expected to be explained by enhanced civic skills and civic-mindedness. Because our analyses showed very little support for this reasoning, we concluded that participation effects regarding political action are very unlikely. The difference between non-members and passive members is likely due to selection. Furthermore, the additional "effects" of involvement are also more likely to involve selection rather than participation, as the mechanisms proposed in the "neo-Tocquevillian paradigm" provided little explanation.

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[11] In some cases, the states of respondents do not change, thereby making the causal order obvious. For example, in the relationship between associational involvement and gender (Chapter 7), gender differences come first.

[12] In strict terms, however, conclusions about the lack of *participation effects* (when zero correlations are found) should be preliminary, as selection and participation effects may have opposite effects of similar effect size (although this scenario does not seem very plausible in most cases).

[13] This strategy is quasi-causal, as the validity of the conclusions is obviously dependent on the validity of the theoretical assumptions. For example, in the case of political socialization, members might not go through a chain of increased involvement (e.g., from non-member to member, active member, volunteer), but immediately select into certain roles. In this scenario, differences in the political involvement of volunteers and passive members may still be due to selection instead of participation effects.

Third, we may try to assess causality from the data. In Chapter 9, we used two-wave panel data to examine participation effects in the creation of social resources. Although panel data are obviously the most informative type of data when analyzing causality issues, they also confront researchers with new difficulties. One challenge involves the necessity of finding a way to model the data that distinguishes participation from selection, and entry from exit effects, without reference group problems.[14] We chose a simple and strict approach, comparing the group that did not participate in either wave with the group that had entered one or more associations between the first and second wave (a period of roughly 3.5 years). The largest improvement here is that we are able to conclude about how changes in one variable are related to changes in another variable, instead of the correlation between the levels of two variables in cross-sectional research. In the case of participation effects, an increase in participation (in our case, a state change from uninvolved to involved) should be accompanied by an increase in social resources (i.e., $\Delta X \dashrightarrow \Delta Y$ is assumed). Additionally, hypotheses that combine a level and change variable can be tested. E.g., the recruitment mechanism states that the likelihood of participation increases with the size of the social network (more precisely, the number of participants in a person's network), which is a relation of the type $Y \dashrightarrow \Delta X$.

Similar to the case of political activity, we found little evidence of a strong effect of associational involvement on social resources. In general, becoming a member of an association did not result in any growth in social resources, and the effect of volunteering was modest. We argue that this may be explained by a lack of multiplexity in the relationships with fellow members. The contribution of fellow members to an individual's social resources will be much stronger when those fellow members are encountered in other social contexts as well, thereby increasing the strength of the ties. Although participation effects in the general population were small or non-significant, we did find evidence of stronger membership effects among people above 55 years of age, among people without a partner, and among immigrant groups. Because their opportunities in other domains are limited, voluntary association participation may become a more important means of acquiring social resources for these groups. Furthermore, these groups still have something to gain, unlike most respondents, who reported having sufficient social resources, which probably remain quite stable once they are acquired.

In summary, our analyses indicate that researchers should be critical towards the proclaimed effects of voluntary association participation. In the two cases we examined, we were unable to find strong, generic participation effects. To apply

[14] Regressing changes in social resources on changes in the number of memberships would be an example in which there are reference group problems (zero change could mean staying involved in four associations, but also staying involved in none) and in which there is a combination of entry and exit effects (by assuming that the effect of +1 is reversely proportional to -1).

Roßteutscher's (2005) metaphor, we found that a simple drink from the "associative elixir" is insufficient to boost political action or social resources. On the other hand, there may be circumstances in which associational participation is more beneficial than it is in others, especially when the participation is extensive and when fewer opportunities exist in other domains. This may call for a more differentiated way of studying participation and its effects. The following section offers a few ideas about how to accomplish this.

10.5 Voluntary Associations and Future Research

According to Tschirhart (2006), generalizability is an important issue in voluntary association research. Very few findings – regardless of whether they concern trends, causes, or effects – can be generalized to all kinds of voluntary associations. Although I consider this conclusion justified, I do not think that there is much to gain by striving for generalizations in this sense. More provocatively, I think that many of the generalizations and aggregations in voluntary association research hinder the advancement of our knowledge. In this section, I sketch five directions of more differentiated future research, which should contribute to our understanding of what happens inside voluntary associations and why it is important. A focus on mechanisms (cf. Elster, 2007) that cause associational experiences to produce certain outcomes may be a good point of departure for improving our research.

Many empirical studies contain implicit generalizations, especially when associational involvement is operationalized as aggregate membership figures from a list of virtually every type of voluntary association. This assumes that participation in every association concerns the same kind of activities, with the same kind of people, and will therefore produce similar outcomes. A slightly more differentiated way of thinking about associations is to discriminate between different types of associations (e.g., passive versus active associations, or political versus non-political associations), and to compare findings across these types. This strategy is often employed because more detailed information about the organizations is unavailable (as is the case in this dissertation). The strategy remains quite unwieldy, however, as the distinction between associations is made on assumptions rather than on factual characteristics, and there is a risk of ecological fallacy.[15] In order to understand more about the mechanisms that connect participation to its outcomes, we should start analyzing the characteristics of the actual associations instead.

As discussed in Chapter 2, these mechanisms can be very different according to the effect under study. We should not search for a certain type of association that offers all of the desired benefits. Mutz (2006) has shown that this is impossible, as

[15] *Types* of associations are usually surveyed rather than actual associations, which may conceal a considerably variation of organizations within.

the production of some effects requires organizational characteristics that are *opposed to* the characteristics that are required for producing other effects. For example, Mutz shows that mobilizing people into political action works better in associations with similar others, whereas the stimulation of tolerance works better in associations with dissimilar others.

Insights from social psychology can sometimes be applied to associational involvement to come up with mechanisms. For example, Hooghe (2002, 2003b) argues that associational involvement can strengthen democratic values by referring to the principle of *value congruence*. According to this principle, people are encouraged to think that their beliefs are justified when they observe relevant others who hold similar beliefs. According to Hooghe, this implies that democratic values can be enhanced only in associations in which democratic values are dominant, and only those individuals that already hold democratic values will be encouraged in their beliefs (because others do not experience value congruence). Whether this mechanism works is an empirical question. Alternatively, people may consider their fellow members to be an in-group or positive reference group based on other characteristics (cf. Zmerli, 2007), and they may therefore be compliant to others' opinions, including those that concern democratic values. Ideas about cognitive dissonance may be helpful in deriving subsequent mechanisms in this regard. Importantly, theorizing about these mechanisms guides the search for relevant characteristics of associations, fellow participants, and organizational activities. In the remainder of this section, I sketch several ways to proceed, which may solve some of the shortcomings of the current research.

First, the way in which members participate may be examined more closely. In Chapter 9, we found that starting to volunteer enhanced social resources, whereas merely becoming a member did not. This means that the emergence of participation effects requires an adequate level of involvement or specific organizational tasks. An interesting attempt to open the *black box* of participation (cf. Hustinx & Denk, 2009) would be to integrate insights from qualitative organization studies (e.g., Hvenmark, 2008) – which offer many ideas about members' roles, identity and motivation –into quantitative surveys.

Second, it would be valuable to pay more attention to the characteristics of the associations and of fellow members, in accordance with the earlier remarks about mechanisms. There are many organizational characteristics that deserve to be examined. Examples include the composition of the member population (e.g., homogeneity regarding income, gender, education), the extent of cooperation and mutual dependency, and the structure of the organization (horizontal versus vertical). Examining these characteristics, however, does require data that are more elaborate than those that are currently available in representative surveys. One possible way to acquire this information would be to sample both associations and individuals at the local scale (and ask the individuals to record the associations in which they are involved).

Third, researchers should examine differences in institutional context in more detail. Associations have different roles according to the characteristics of the societies in which they are embedded. For example, the political system may play a role: associational involvement may evoke political action more strongly in new democracies than it does in old democracies. Combined with the remarks in the previous paragraph, this means that participation is embedded in both an organizational and institutional setting. One of the challenges for future research is to connect these layers. In this dissertation, our multilevel analyses distinguished between individual and country characteristics. Future studies could attempt to add the intermediate layer of organizational context, perhaps by examining whether the relationship between associational involvement and political action is dependent on individual differences, organizational structure, the political system, and perhaps interrelations between these characteristics.

Fourth, associational participation may be most beneficial for those who have most to gain. For example, it could be that only those with low initial levels of generalized trust are able to improve such trust through participation. This implies that associational experiences benefit only small segments of the member population (although this may still be very valuable). Paradoxically, we found that those who are most exposed to the possible benefits of the "participation treatment" are those who need it the least. As a consequence, the average participation effect is small (as most participants have little to gain).

Fifth, if mechanisms are more important than membership as such, we should look for associative relations instead of associational membership. In other words, we may also consider examining other social contexts. As shown by Crossley (2008a), informal leisure groups may have characteristics resembling those of formal associations, and they may provide similar functions. Examples of associative relations can also be found in the domain of work. Estlund (2003) claims, "As other forms of social engagement decline, people increasingly find that crucial 'sense of belonging' more among their co-workers [...] than in any group other than family or friends" (p. 28). From this perspective, workplaces may contribute to civil society, because they stimulate cooperation and trust, enhance civic skills, and encourage interaction between segregated groups, particularly with regard to race (Estlund, 2000).

In summary, there are a number of avenues through which we can continue to improve our knowledge in future research. Moreover, new cross-sectional and panel data are becoming available rapidly, which offer many new possibilities. I am looking forward to making more contributions to the voluntary association debate in the future.

Samenvatting (Summary in Dutch)[1]

Verschuivingen in de deelname aan vrijwillige associaties
In het introductiehoofdstuk gaf ik aan dat een belangrijk deel van de discussie over de deelname aan vrijwillige associaties[2] draait om zorgen over *verlies aan gemeenschap*. In het Nederlands wordt deze discussie vaak gevoerd onder de noemer *individualisering*. Hoewel het niet het primaire doel van dit onderzoek was om verlies aan gemeenschap systematisch in kaart te brengen schetsen de bevindingen toch een beeld van de stand van zaken in Nederland. Naast het bestuderen van de trends in de deelname aan vrijwillige associaties stond in het eerste deel van deze dissertatie ook de relatie met de privé sfeer centraal (zie figuur 1.1). De onderzoeksvraag voor dit deel luidde:
Hoe heeft de deelname aan vrijwillige associaties zich ontwikkeld sinds 1975 en hoe zijn deze ontwikkelingen gerelateerd aan trends in aanverwante sociale contexten?

Zoals in hoofdstuk 2 werd betoogd is het belangrijker te kijken naar actieve vormen van deelname (bijvoorbeeld vrijwilligerswerk) dan naar geaggregeerde participatiecijfers. Op basis van gegevens van het tijdbestedingsonderzoek (TBO) valt een afname in de actieve vormen van deelname aan vrijwillige associaties te constateren in Nederland vanaf grofweg 1990. Deze afname in actieve deelname is ook gevonden in onderzoek in andere landen (hoofdstuk 2) en verloopt deels via cohortvervanging: elk geboortecohort van na de Tweede Wereldoorlog participeerde minder in dit soort activiteiten. In de appendix staat een uitgebreid overzicht van de (geaggregeerde) trends, inclusief gegevens over 2005 (zie tabel A10.1). Deze gegevens waren nog niet beschikbaar toen hoofdstuk 3 geschreven werd. De tabel laat zien dat de trends die zijn gevonden in hoofdstuk 3 zijn doorgezet tussen 2000 en 2005. De terugloop in actieve deelname aan vrijwillige associaties en vrijwilligerswerk bleek vooral het aantal deelnemers te betreffen, niet zozeer de tijd die men investeert per deelnemer.

Een andere indicator voor verlies aan gemeenschap die werd onderzocht is de deelname aan vrijetijdsverenigingen. Bevindingen in eerder onderzoek lieten zien dat deze deelname is toegenomen door de jaren (De Hart, 2005), wat als verwerping van Putnam's *Bowling Alone* hypothese is opgevat (Halpern, 2005). Bij het

[1] Dit hoofdstuk is een vrije vertaling van paragrafen 10.2 t/m 10.5. Zie paragraaf 10.1 voor een meer feitelijke opsomming van bevindingen (in het Engels).
[2] Het Engelse "voluntary association" kan worden vertaald als "vereniging", maar wordt doorgaans in het (academische) Engels ruimer gebruikt dan in het Nederlands. Er vallen dan ook voorbeelden onder als vakbonden, maatschappelijke organisaties, sociëteiten, kerkelijke organisaties en vrijwilligersorganisaties. Het staat dan eerder voor een type sociaal verband (hoofdstuk 2) dan voor de vereniging in enge zin.

beoordelen van deze cijfers moet echter wel rekening gehouden worden met een stijging van het aantal vrijetijdsactiviteiten. Na een gedetailleerde analyse van een breed scala aan vrijetijdsactiviteiten en hun sociale context (gecategoriseerd in: activiteiten alleen, in een informele groep, of in een vereniging) kunnen we deze eerdere conclusies verfijnen. Als verenigingsactiviteiten worden geanalyseerd als proportie van het totale aantal activiteiten blijkt dat er geen toe- of afname te ontdekken valt. Kortom, in dit domein zijn geen tekenen van individualisering te ontdekken (echter wel van informalisering, zie verderop).

Naast het vinden van betrouwbare trendgegevens over verenigingsdeelname is het vinden van manieren om alternatieve vormen van sociale participatie te meten en analyseren een grote uitdaging. Wanneer een afname van activiteiten in vrijwillige associaties wordt geconstateerd betekent dit niet noodzakelijk dat mensen zich geheel hebben teruggetrokken uit het sociale leven, hun leven slijtend achter hun televisies; er zijn allerlei andere vormen van sociale interactie. Of, zoals Stolle en Rochon (1998) het verwoorden:

> Hoewel sociaal kapitaal kan worden verzorgd door een variëteit aan formele en informele interacties tussen leden van de samenleving is het volledige scala van deze interacties niet zichtbaar. Wat we kunnen observeren is de gangbaarheid van lidmaatschappen in vrijwillige organisaties in een gegeven samenleving. Als gevolg daarvan zijn lidmaatschappen van associaties de gebruikelijke indicator om de vorming of teloorgang van sociaal kapitaal te analyseren. (p.48)

Ik heb aangegeven dat er theoretische argumenten zijn om een speciale rol voor vrijwillige associaties te verwachten (hoofdstuk 2), maar dit betekent niet dat andere vormen van sociale participatie geen vergelijkbare functies kunnen hebben. Het is belangrijk om alternatieven in beschouwing te nemen bij het bestuderen van deelname aan vrijwillige associaties. Onderdeel hiervan zijn vormen van sociale participatie in de privé sfeer (zie figuur 1.1). Halpern (2005) is één van de auteurs die heeft gesuggereerd dat er substitutie plaatsvindt van verenigingsactiviteiten naar informele sociale contacten. Om dit te onderzoeken werden vier typen sociale participatie onderzocht (hoofdstuk 3). Dit wees uit dat informele sociale participatie niet belangrijker is geworden. In tegendeel, het onderhouden van informele sociale contacten binnenshuis (met name visites afleggen en visite ontvangen) is aanzienlijk afgenomen, terwijl sociale participatie in (semi-)publieke omgevingen (tijd doorgebracht in cafés, restaurants, op feesten, recepties en dergelijke) gelijk is gebleven. De enige vorm van sociale participatie die is toegenomen is sociaal contact op afstand. Op grond van deze resultaten valt een overgang van activiteiten in vrijwillige associaties naar sociaal contact op afstand te vermoeden, maar niet van vrijwillige associaties naar informele sociale participatie.

De resultaten van ons onderzoek lieten echter wel een proces van informalisering in een andere vorm zien. Dit betreft niet een verschuiving in de soort activiteiten, maar een verschuiving in de context van activiteiten. Tussen 1975 en

2005 groeide het aandeel vrijetijdsactiviteiten in informeel verband gestaag. Dit proces van informalisering was het duidelijkst in het domein van sport. Mensen blijken in toenemende mate sporten te kiezen met een inherent informeel of individueel karakter en blijken ook vaker voorkeur te hebben voor een informeel verband wanneer een sport in verschillende mogelijke verbanden kan worden beoefend. We konden niet beschikken over informatie over de samenstelling van deze informele verbanden, maar eerder onderzoek heeft laten zien dat informele verbanden en verenigingen veel gezamenlijke kenmerken kunnen hebben: synchrone ritmes zijn belangrijk, mensen ontlenen identiteit en een gevoel ergens bij te horen, deelnemers verlenen elkaar soms advies of geven informatie en in sommige omstandigheden wordt er overgegaan tot collectieve actie (Crossley, 2008a).

Hoofdstuk 3 en 4 lieten zien dat cohortverschillen belangrijk zijn bij het verklaren van sociale participatie. De cohortverschillen geven een idee van de trends voorafgaand aan en volgend op de geobserveerde periode en zijn een eerste stap in het komen tot verklaringen. Jongere cohorten blijken minder geneigd tot actieve deelname in het verenigingsleven en het doen van vrijwilligerswerk. Dit betekent echter niet dat hun totale sociale participatie geringer is; jongere cohorten besteden meer tijd aan sociale participatie in publieke en semi-publieke omgevingen. Het afwijkende patroon van jongere leeftijdsgroepen correspondeert ook met onderzoek naar internetgebruik; het aandeel van het internetgebruik omwille van het onderhouden van sociale contacten onder jongeren blijkt groter dan onder ouderen. Volgens cijfers van de Haan en Huysmans (2006) spenderen mensen tussen de 12 en 19 jaar 47% van hun computertijd aan sociale activiteiten (waaronder e-mail, MSN en ander chatprogramma's), terwijl dat in de populatie als geheel 29% is (eigen berekening). In lijn met deze bevindingen is ook onze conclusie dat jongere leeftijdsgroepen vaker voor een informeel verband kiezen bij hun vrijetijdsactiviteiten.

In een ander type analyse van de relatie tussen de *civil society* en de privé sfeer (hoofdstuk 5) hebben we bekeken of er bepaalde vrijetijdsactiviteiten zijn die informele hulp en vrijwilligerswerk bevorderen. De uitkomsten daarvan ondersteunen het neo-Tocquevilliaanse idee van een "sociale spiraal" (cf. Lichterman, 2005) niet. Volgens deze hypothese zouden mensen naarmate ze meer activiteiten ontplooien in brede sociale kringen (buiten het eigen huishouden) meer begripvol en hulpvaardig (geoperationaliseerd als informele hulp en het doen van vrijwilligerswerk) moeten worden. Dit vonden we echter niet terug in onze data. De aard van de activiteiten deed er echter wel toe; naarmate mensen meer productieve activiteiten (waarin actief iets wordt gedaan of gemaakt, in tegenstelling tot activiteiten waarin alleen iets geconsumeerd, ondergaan, of bekeken wordt) ondernamen waren ze ook meer geneigd zich prosociaal te gedragen. De gevonden effecten waren echter zwak. Hoewel de data geen informatie bevatten over de causale mechanismen die ten grondslag liggen aan de samenhang, lijkt deze vorm van "serieuze vrije tijd" (Stebbins, 1992) verschillende burger- en sociale

vaardigheden van mensen te kunnen vergroten. Deze worden op hun beurt weer vaak als hulpbron aangemerkt bij deelname aan vrijwillige associaties.

Samengevat blijkt dat de geaggregeerde lidmaatschapsgetallen in Nederland verschillende veranderingen verhullen. Actieve participatie in vrijwillige associaties en het doen van vrijwilligerswerk zijn wat afgenomen, met name door cohortvervanging. In plaats van verminderde sociale participatie laten de jongere cohorten veranderde participatiepatronen zien; ze interacteren meer in (semi)publieke omgevingen en zijn meer geneigd contacten te onderhouden via de telefoon of het internet. Gegeven het proces van cohortvervanging is het waarschijnlijk dat deze trends zich doorzetten, wat betekent dat de mate van "burgeractiviteit" in de toekomst mogelijk problematisch kan worden. Een tegenkracht is echter de toename in activiteiten in informele verbanden.

Determinanten van participatie, redenen voor verandering, en selectie

Doel van deze dissertatie was niet het overdoen van het – ruimschoots aanwezige – bestaande onderzoek naar de determinanten van participatie in vrijwillige associaties. In plaats daarvan lag de nadruk op twee deelaspecten waarover weinig bekend is: verandering van de determinanten door de tijd en variatie van deze determinanten tussen landen (en de verklaring daarvan). De onderzoeksvraag bij het tweede deel van de dissertatie (hoofdstukken 6 en 7) was als volgt:
In welke mate variëren de determinanten van participatie in vrijwillige associaties over tijd en tussen landen, en hoe is het laatste gerelateerd aan de welvaartsstaat?

Voorgaand onderzoek heeft met name het belang van secularisering en het gestegen onderwijsniveau benadrukt als drijvende krachten achter veranderingen in de deelname aan vrijwillige associaties. Deze factoren bleken ook belangrijk in dit onderzoek, maar hun invloed bleek minder eenduidig dan eerder werd aangenomen.

Religiositeit en het doen van vrijwilligerswerk zijn met elkaar verbonden; de geneigdheid vrijwilligerswerk te doen blijkt toe te nemen met de mate van religiositeit. De tijd die wordt besteed aan dit vrijwilligerswerk (als men het eenmaal doet) blijkt echter niet afhankelijk van religiositeit. Gegeven deze relatie zou men verwachten dat de afname in kerkgang in de afgelopen decennia in Nederland heeft geleid tot een afname in het aantal vrijwilligers (en wellicht ook een toekomstige afname tot gevolg heeft). Deze afname is echter bescheiden geweest en staat niet in verhouding tot de afname in kerkgang. Uit de analyses in dit proefschrift bleek dat dit gedeeltelijk verklaard kan worden doordat tegelijk met de afname van kerkelijkheid het effect van kerkgang op vrijwilligerswerk is toegenomen, wat de totale "schade" beperkt. Een deel van het vrijwilligerswerk verloopt via kerken en kerkelijke organisaties. Deze organisaties worden geconfronteerd met een kleiner wordende groep van potentiële vrijwilligers, maar zullen ongetwijfeld wel proberen hun dienstverlening in stand te houden. Om dit te bewerkstelligen zal de gemiddelde kerkganger meer moeten doen en vaker worden gevraagd een bijdrage te leveren.

Onze bevindingen waren in lijn met deze redenering; het groeiende participatieverschil tussen kerkgangers en niet-kerkgangers wordt gemaakt door vrijwilligerswerk in religieuze organisaties.

Onze analyses wezen ook uit dat secularisering – naast een negatieve invloed op participatie in vrijwillige associaties – ook positieve gevolgen kan hebben voor sociale participatie. Bezoeken aan recepties, feesten, restaurants, bars, clubs en dergelijken hebben een negatieve samenhang met religiositeit. De waarden van mensen met sterke religieuze overtuigingen (met name Protestanten) zijn waarschijnlijk inconsistent met de hedonistische connotaties van dit type sociale participatie. Als gevolg daarvan zijn de sociale participatiepatronen van religieuzen en niet-religieuzen verschillend. De combinatie van minder religiositeit en vrijwilligerswerk en meer publieke sociale participatie (en meer sociale interactie op afstand) is typerend voor jongere cohorten. De consequenties van deze trends zijn niet onmiddellijk duidelijk; elke type sociale participatie heeft waarschijnlijk zijn voor- en nadelen. Actieve deelname aan vrijwillige associaties en het doen van vrijwilligerswerk helpen bij het produceren van collectieve goederen (hoewel "collectief" in dit verband ook een erg beperkte groep kan zijn), terwijl de publieke sociale participatie onder niet-kerkgangers mogelijk helpt bij het bewerkstelligen van sociale contacten tussen groepen met een verschillende sociale achtergrond (maar tegelijkertijd zullen hierdoor geen collectieve goederen worden geproduceerd).

Onze analyses herbevestigden ook de sterke relatie tussen onderwijs en participatie in vrijwillige associaties die in eerder onderzoek vaak is gevonden, hoewel er ook hier meer te vertellen blijkt. Als gevolg van het gestegen onderwijsniveau zou men een toename verwachten in participatie. Uit onze analyses bleek echter dat dit effect gering is en ook dat het kleiner is dan het negatieve effect van secularisering. Dit kan tevens (deels) door veranderde effectgrootte worden verklaard. De verschillen tussen mensen met een lager en hoger opleidingsniveau in het doen van vrijwilligerswerk zijn afgenomen tussen 1975 en 2005, wat het gevolg is van een relatief sterke daling onder hoger opgeleiden. Door de verandering van het effect van onderwijs blijft de toename in participatie uit.

Verder bleek dat hoger opgeleiden meer geneigd zijn deel te nemen aan informele verbanden, terwijl lager opgeleiden relatief vaak individuele vrijetijdsactiviteiten ondernemen. Sociale vaardigheden en de grootte van sociale netwerken zullen hierbij ongetwijfeld een rol spelen. Dat hoger opgeleiden grotere sociale netwerken hebben dan lager opgeleiden vormt ook een deel van de verklaring van het feit dat hoger opgeleiden meer tijd besteden aan het onderhouden van sociale contacten door middel van geschreven post, telefoongesprekken en e-mail. Er is echter één uitzondering op de regel dat hogere opgeleiden meer sociale activiteiten ondernemen; lager opgeleiden spenderen meer tijd aan visites (ontvangen en afleggen). Kortom, de toename van het onderwijsniveau heeft

gevolgen voor sociale participatie, maar de invloed ervan is complexer dan eerder gedacht.

Er zijn ook verschillende andere factoren die veranderingen teweeg brengen in sociale participatie. Toegenomen tijdsdruk en –fragmentatie zijn twee voorbeelden hiervan. De afname van sociale participatie binnenshuis is gecorreleerd met de toename in het gemiddeld aantal werkuren (per week). Naarmate tijdsproblemen groter worden blijken mensen hun vrijetijdsactiviteiten ook eerder in individueel of informeel verband te laten plaatsvinden dan in verenigingsverband. Een gerelateerde bevinding was dat actieve participatie in vrijwillige associaties in toenemende mate verbonden is met de fase van pensionering in de levensloop. Samen geven deze bevindingen aan dat de toename in tijdsproblemen, die waarschijnlijk worden veroorzaakt door de toename in het totaal aantal verantwoordelijkheden in de werk- en privésfeer, verantwoordelijk zijn voor verschuivende behoeftes in sociale participatie. Geconfronteerd met tijdsdruk, planningsproblemen, of fragmentering van tijd zijn mensen eerder geneigd hun activiteiten in individueel of informeel verband te laten plaatsvinden in plaats van in verenigingsverband, waarbinnen activiteiten doorgaans een vaste duur hebben en op gezette tijden plaatsvinden.

De huidige kennis over macrofactoren die participatie in vrijwillige associaties is vrij beperkt en we weten nog minder over het samenspel van micro en macro factoren. In hoofdstuk 7 hebben we getracht bij te dragen aan deze literatuur door de invloed van welvaartsstaatregelingen op participatie in vrijwillige associaties te onderzoeken. Voorgaand onderzoek richtte zich voornamelijk op de "crowding out" hypothese (van Oorschot & Arts, 2005), oftewel het idee dat de welvaartsstaat sociaal kapitaal verdringt. In ons onderzoek kwam naar voren dat – als er significante verbanden bestaan tussen de welvaartsstaat en vrijwillige initiatieven – de richting van het effect afhangt van regio. Er bestaat een positieve ("crowding in") relatie in West- en Centraal Europa en een negatieve ("crowding out") daarbuiten. Verder bleek dat welvaartsstaatuitgaven de ongelijkheid in participatie terugdringen. Een mogelijke verklaring daarvoor is gelegen in het proces van herverdeling van hulpbronnen, dat plaatsvindt in de sterkere welvaartsstaten. Een dergelijke herverdeling zorgt ervoor dat de positie van de zwakkeren wordt verbeterd, waardoor dezen over meer hulpbronnen kunnen beschikken die nodig zijn om te kunnen participeren. Welvaartsstaatuitgaven hebben daarmee een nivellerend effect op participatoire ongelijkheid.

Samengevat zijn de verklaringen van participatie in vrijwillige associaties minder eenduidig dan eerder aangenomen. De invloed van religiositeit en onderwijs is complex. Secularisering draagt bij aan een afname van vrijwilligerswerk, maar tegelijkertijd gaat de deelname hieraan door kerkgangers juist omhoog, daarmee een deel van de dienstverlening in religieuze organisaties in stand houdend. Tegelijkertijd zorgt secularisering er ook voor dat andere, meer informele vormen van sociale participatie toenemen. De verhoging van het onderwijspeil over de

afgelopen decennia heeft niet geresulteerd in een opwaartse trend in de participatie in vrijwillige associaties. Uit onze analyses kwamen hiervoor twee verklaringen naar voren: de verschillen tussen lager en hoger opgeleiden zijn door de jaren kleiner geworden en de hoger opgeleiden zijn zich ook in toenemende mate zich gaan richten op alternatieve, informele verbanden. Ten slotte hebben onze analyses laten zien dat de determinanten van participatie zijn verweven met de institutionele inbedding van vrijwillige associaties en dat de grootte van de effecten aanzienlijk varieert al naar gelang de welvaartsstaatuitgaven van het desbetreffende land.

Effecten van participatie in vrijwillige associaties en causaliteit
In hoofdstuk 8 en 9 zijn twee van de veronderstelde interne effecten (die verwijzen naar de bijeffecten of voordelen van participatie voor de betrokkenen) van vrijwillige associaties onderzocht: politieke socialisatie en sociale hulpbronnen. Deze uitkomsten verschillen in meerdere opzichten. Politieke socialisatie is al uitgebreid onderzocht in de politieke wetenschappen en is verbonden met democratische idealen. Sociale hulpbronnen zijn nog niet vaak onderzocht in relatie tot participatie in vrijwillige associaties, spreken meer tot de verbeelding van sociologen en hebben een meer alledaags karakter. De overkoepelende onderzoeksvraag bij dit deel van de dissertatie luidde:
In hoeverre worden de sociale hulpbronnen en politieke socialisatie van participanten bevorderd door hun deelname aan vrijwillige associaties?

Een van de belangrijkste uitdagingen in het onderzoek naar dit soort relaties is informatie verkrijgen over causaliteit. Theoretisch kunnen de "uitkomsten" van participatie vaak net zo goed het resultaat zijn van selectie-effecten. Afhankelijk van het type beschikbare data en het beschikbare voorgaand onderzoek hebben we drie strategieën gebruikt om informatie te verkrijgen over de (causale) relaties tussen participatie in vrijwillige associaties en daaraan verbonden disposities en gedrag.

Ten eerste kunnen we correlaties in cross-sectionele data onderzoeken. In sommige gevallen weten we niet of deze correlaties bestaan. In hoofdstuk 5 bijvoorbeeld onderzochten we de samenhang tussen de aard en sociale context van vrijetijdsactiviteiten en burgerparticipatie. Hoewel dit slechts één van de voorwaarden voor causaliteit is, hebben we informatie ingewonnen over de activiteiten die wel en de activiteiten die niet gerelateerd zijn aan burgerparticipatie. Deze strategie is waarschijnlijk het meest informatief wanneer de veronderstelde relaties niet kunnen worden aangetoond.

Ten tweede kunnen theoretische argumenten en cross-sectionele data worden gecombineerd tot "quasi-causale" analyses. In hoofdstuk 8 hebben we de geldigheid van het politieke socialisatie idee onderzocht. De (theoretisch) veronderstelde mechanismen starten met participatie in vrijwillige associatie, dat via het stimuleren van o.a. politieke interesse zou moeten leiden tot vergroting van politieke actie. Op basis hiervan kunnen quasi-causale hypothesen worden opgesteld. Actieve leden

zouden bijvoorbeeld meer politieke actie moeten laten zien dan passieve leden en burgervaardigheden en democratische waarden zouden een deel van dit verschil moeten wegverklaren. Onze analyses boden echter weinig ondersteuning voor deze gedachten, waardoor we moesten concluderen dat participatie-effecten ten aanzien van politieke socialisatie onwaarschijnlijk zijn. Plausibeler is dat de gevonden verschillen het gevolg zijn van selectie.

Ten derde kunnen we proberen informatie over causaliteit uit de data te halen. In hoofdstuk 9 gebruikten we panel data (2 waves) om participatie-effecten ten aanzien van sociale hulpbronnen te onderzoeken. Hoewel panel data de meeste informatie bieden over causaliteit worden onderzoekers ook geconfronteerd met nieuwe problemen. Een uitdaging daarbij is om een manier te vinden waarbij participatie van selectie-effecten worden onderscheiden, intrede van uittrede wordt onderscheiden en referentiegroepproblemen worden vermeden. Wij hebben gekozen voor een eenvoudige aanpak, waarbij de groep die niet participeerde (in beide metingen) wordt vergeleken met de groep die een vrijwillige associatie binnentrad (tussen de eerste en tweede meting; grofweg een periode van 3,5 jaar). De grote winst hierbij is dat kan worden nagegaan in hoeverre veranderingen in de ene variabele samenhangen met veranderingen in de andere variabele, in tegenstelling tot de samenhang in de niveaus van variabelen in cross-sectioneel onderzoek. In het geval van een participatie-effect zou een verandering in de participatie (X) gepaard moeten gaan met een verandering in sociale hulpbronnen (Y), oftewel $\Delta X \rightarrow \Delta Y$. Verder is het mogelijk hypothesen te toetsen die een combinatie zijn van niveau- en veranderingsvariabelen. Het rekruteringsmechanisme bijvoorbeeld stelt dat de waarschijnlijkheid van participatie toeneemt met de grootte van sociale netwerken (of preciezer, het aantal participanten in het persoonlijke netwerk van een individu; $Y \rightarrow \Delta X$).

Onze analyses boden weinig ondersteuning voor het idee dat participatie in vrijwillige associaties de hoeveelheid sociale hulpbronnen vergroot. In het algemeen resulteerde het lid worden niet in een groei van sociale hulpbronnen en het effect van starten met vrijwilligerswerk was bescheiden. Mogelijk wordt dit verklaard door een gebrek aan multiplexiteit in de relaties tussen leden. De rol van mede-participanten in de creatie van sociale hulpbronnen zal veel groter zijn als zij ook in andere sociale contexten worden ontmoet, wat de sterkte van de band helpt vergroten. Hoewel participatie-effecten in de gehele populatie klein en/of niet-significant waren vonden we sterkere effecten onder mensen ouder dan 55 jaar, zonder partner en onder allochtonen. Participatie in vrijwillige associaties is voor die groepen mogelijk een belangrijker middel om sociale hulpbronnen op te bouwen aangezien de mogelijkheden in andere contexten geringer zijn. Bovendien hebben deze groepen meer te winnen dan anderen, die vaak rapporteren al over veel sociale hulpbronnen te beschikken.

Deze bevindingen legitimeren een kritische houding ten aanzien van de veronderstelde effecten van participatie in vrijwillige associaties. In de twee

gevallen die we onderzochten vonden we geen bewijs voor sterke, generieke participatie-effecten. Of om Roßteutscher's (2005) metafoor te gebruiken: simpelweg "drinken van het participatie elixir" is onvoldoende om politieke socialisatie en sociale hulpbronnen te bevorderen. Van de andere kant kunnen er omstandigheden zijn waarin deelname winstgevender is dan in andere situaties, met name wanneer participatie intensief is en wanneer de mogelijkheden in andere domeinen geringer zijn.

Vrijwillige associaties en toekomstig onderzoek

Volgens Tschirhart (2006) is generaliseerbaarheid een belangrijk probleem in het onderzoek naar vrijwillige associaties. Weinig bevindingen – ongeacht of ze betrekking hebben op trends, oorzaken of gevolgen – kunnen worden gegeneraliseerd naar alle (typen) vrijwillige associaties. Hoewel ik denk dat deze conclusie klopt lijkt me er tegelijkertijd weinig winst te behalen in het nastreven van dergelijke generalisaties. Of meer provocatief: ik denk dat veel van de generalisaties en aggregaties in het onderzoek naar vrijwillige associaties de verdieping van onze kennis tegenhouden. In het laatste deel van deze paragraaf zal ik vijf richtingen van meer gedifferentieerd onderzoek schetsen, welke zouden moeten bijdragen aan het begrijpen van wat er gebeurt binnen vrijwillige associaties en waarom dat van belang is. Een focus op mechanismen (cf. Elster, 2007) die er voor zorgen dat activiteit in vrijwillige associaties bepaalde uitkomsten produceert is daarbij een goed vertrekpunt.

Veel empirische studies bevatte impliciete generalisaties, vooral als deelname aan vrijwillige associaties is geoperationaliseerd als een optelsom van lidmaatschappen, uit een lijst van allerlei typen vrijwillige associaties. De assumptie is dan dat de activiteiten en omstandigheden in de verschillende vrijwillige associaties vergelijkbaar zijn en dat dezelfde effecten geproduceerd zullen worden. Een wat gedifferentieerdere manier van onderzoek is verschillende typen vrijwillige associaties te onderscheiden (bijvoorbeeld passieve versus actieve, of politieke versus non-politieke) en de bevindingen ten aanzien van deze typen te vergelijken. Deze strategie wordt vaak gevolgd omdat meer gedetailleerde informatie niet beschikbaar is (ook in deze dissertatie). Deze methode blijft echter grof en het gemaakte onderscheid is gebaseerd op assumpties in plaats van feitelijke kenmerken. Als we meer willen begrijpen over de mechanismen van participatie zouden we er beter aan doen de kenmerken van de desbetreffende vrijwillige associaties te bestuderen.

Zoals aangegeven in hoofdstuk 2 kunnen deze mechanismen verschillend zijn al naar gelang het effect dat wordt bestudeerd. Daarom is het ook niet nuttig te zoeken naar een bepaald type vrijwillige associatie dat alle gewenste uitkomsten biedt. Mutz (2006) heeft laten zien dat dit onmogelijk is, omdat sommige effecten organisatiekenmerken vereisen die het tegenovergestelde zijn van de organisatiekenmerken die andere effecten vereisen. Zij stelt bijvoorbeeld dat het

mobiliseren van mensen ten behoeve van politieke actie beter gaat in homogene vrijwillige associaties, terwijl de stimulering van tolerantie beter werkt in heterogene associaties.

Inzichten uit de sociale psychologie kunnen soms worden toegepast om tot mechanismen te komen. Hooghe (2002, 2003b) beargumenteert bijvoorbeeld dat deelname aan vrijwillige associaties democratische waarden kan bevorderen door middel van het principe van *waardecongruentie*. Volgens dit principe worden mensen aangemoedigd om te denken dat hun overtuigingen juist zijn als ze zien dat relevante anderen dezelfde overtuigingen hebben. Volgens Hooghe impliceert dit dat democratische waarden alleen kunnen worden versterkt in vrijwillige associaties waarin democratische waarden dominant zijn en dat deze versterking alleen kan plaatsvinden bij de mensen die er al democratische waarden op na hielden (want anderen ervaren geen waardecongruentie). Of dit mechanisme werkt is een empirische kwestie, mogelijkerwijs beschouwen mensen hun medeparticipanten als "in-group" of referentiegroep (cf. Zmerli, 2007) op basis van andere kenmerken dan hun democratische waarden, om vervolgens daar toch door beïnvloed te worden. Ideeën over cognitieve dissonantie kunnen helpen vervolgens weer nieuwe mechanismen te formuleren. De moraal van het verhaal is dat het formuleren van mechanismen duidelijk maakt wat relevante kenmerken zijn van vrijwillige associaties, de deelnemers daarvan en de activiteiten. In het vervolg van deze paragraaf probeer ik aanpakken te schetsen die kunnen helpen de tekortkomingen van het huidige onderzoek te overbruggen.

Ten eerste zou de manier waarop deelname wordt onderzocht kunnen worden verfijnd. In hoofdstuk 9 bleek dat vrijwilligerswerk doen wel een effect had op sociale hulpbronnen, maar (alleen) lidmaatschap niet. Dit betekent dat een zekere intensiteit van participatie, of het uitvoeren van bepaalde organisatorische taken het ontstaan van participatie-effecten kan bevorderen. Een interessante poging om de "black box" van participatie (cf. Hustinx & Denk, 2009) te openen in dit opzicht zou zijn inzichten van kwalitatieve organisatie studies (zie bijvoorbeeld Hvenmark, 2009) – die verschillende ideeën bieden over de rollen die leden vervullen, over identiteit en motivatie – te integreren in het sociologische onderzoek.

Ten tweede zou het waardevol zijn meer aandacht te besteden aan de kenmerken van organisaties en medeleden, conform de eerdere opmerkingen over mechanismen. Verschillende organisatiekenmerken verdienen te worden onderzocht, zoals de compositie van de leden (homogeniteit ten aanzien van sociale achtergrond en andere zaken), de mate van coöperatie, onderlinge afhankelijkheid en organisatiestructuur. Dergelijk onderzoek vraagt echter wel om uitgebreidere data dan op het moment aanwezig zijn in representatieve surveys. Een mogelijke manier om deze informatie te vergaren zou zijn op lokaal niveau een steekproef te trekken van zowel vrijwillige associaties als individuen (en aan hen te vragen om aan te geven tot welke vrijwillige associaties ze behoren).

Ten derde zou de institutionele context meer in detail kunnen worden onderzocht. Vrijwillige associaties kennen verschillende rollen al naar gelang de samenlevingen waarin ze zijn ingebed. Het politieke systeem zou bijvoorbeeld een rol kunnen spelen, wanneer blijkt dat participatie in nieuwe democratieën wél politieke actie stimuleert maar in oude democratieën niet. Kortom, individuele participatie is ingebed in zowel een organisationele als institutionele omgeving. Een van de uitdagingen voor toekomstig onderzoek is deze lagen te verbinden. De "schools of democracy" hypothese zou bijvoorbeeld nog gedetailleerder onderzocht kunnen worden door na te gaan of de relatie tussen participatie in vrijwillige associaties en politieke actie afhankelijk is van individuele verschillen, organisatiestructuur, het politieke systeem en de relaties tussen deze lagen.

Ten vierde is het de moeite waard na te gaan in hoeverre participatie-effecten voorkomen onder groepen die relatief veel te winnen hebben. Bijvoorbeeld, het zou kunnen dat alleen degenen met weinig veralgemeend vertrouwen in staat zijn dat naar aanleiding van deelname aan vrijwillige associaties uit te breiden. Dit impliceert dat activiteiten in vrijwillige associaties alleen winstgevend zijn voor kleine segmenten van de populatie (maar nog steeds erg waardevol kunnen zijn). Paradoxaal genoeg bleek in dit proefschrift dat degene die het meest blootgesteld zijn aan de "participatie behandeling" deze het minst nodig hebben. Als gevolg daarvan zijn gemiddelde participatie-effecten doorgaans klein.

Ten vijfde is het interessant – als mechanismen belangrijker zijn dan lidmaatschap als zodanig – te kijken naar associatieve relaties in andere domeinen dan vrijwillige associaties. Zoals Crossley (2008a) heeft laten zien kunnen informele vrijetijdsverbanden kenmerken hebben die vergelijkbaar zijn met die van vrijwillige associaties en daarmee wellicht vergelijkbare functies bieden. Ook in de context van werk kunnen associatieve relaties gevonden worden. Estlund (2003) claimt: "Terwijl andere vormen van sociaal engagement afnemen vinden mensen het cruciale 'gevoel van ergens behoren' meer onder hun collega's dan in andere groepen buiten familie en vrienden" (p.28). Vanuit dit perspectief kunnen werkplekken ook bijdragen aan de "civil society"; ze stimuleren mogelijk samenwerking en vertrouwen, vergroten burgervaardigheden en moedigen interactie aan tussen gesegregeerde groepen, in het bijzonder met betrekking to rassenverschillen (Estlund, 2000).

Kortom, er zijn verschillende richtingen waarin de huidige kennis over participatie in vrijwillige associaties verder kan worden uitgebreid. Bovendien komen er in snel tempo nieuwe cross-sectionele en panel data beschikbaar, met nieuwe mogelijkheden. Ik kijk er naar uit om in de toekomst verdere bijdragen aan dit debat te leveren.

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Appendix

Table A1.1
Operationalization of Voluntary Associational Participation

Chapter	Operationalization	Remarks
3	Voluntary association activities+ volunteering as DV	Three other types of social participation as DV's next to associational participation
4	Active participation in leisure associations as DV	Participation in informal groups and individual leisure activities as DV's next to associational participation
5	Voluntary association activities+ volunteering as DV	
6	Voluntary association activities+ volunteering as DV	
7	Active associational participation as DV	Separately for leisure, interest, activist, and religious associations
8	Active associational participation as IV	Separately for leisure, interest, and activist associations
9	Membership in "active" voluntary associations	Sum of sports, cultural, religious, and hobby/ leisure-time/ youth associations

Note. DV = Dependent Variable; IV = Independent Variable

Table A7.1
Descriptive statistics ESS

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Active involvement:					
- Religious organizations	31,596	0	4	0.330	0.825
- Leisure organizations	31,647	0	4	0.889	1.188
- Interest organizations	31,636	0	4	0.549	0.791
- Activist organizations	31,623	0	4	0.360	0.740
Education	31,510	0	6	2.94	1.52
Income	25,724	1	12	5.9	2.51
Women	31,663	1	2	1.52	0.5
Age	31,552	18	97	47.724	17.173
Age squared	31,552	3.24	94.09	25.725	17.406
Church attendance	31,571	1	7	2.67	1.569
Citizenship	31,678	1	2	1.97	0.161
Children in household	31,526	1	2	1.42	0.494
Household size	31,665	1	15	2.76	1.417
Length of residence	31,366	0	92	23.87	19.247
Marital status	31,558				
Religious denomination	31,486				
Urbanization	31,559	1	5	3.07	1.196
Work status	31,169				
GDP/ capita	31,701	46.3	146.6	103.135	27.244
Years of democracy	31,701	10	82	52.06	31.622
Welfare state expenditure	29,655	-0.072	0.059	0	0.036
Valid N (listwise)	31,701				

Table A7.2
Descriptive statistics ISSP

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Active involvement:					
- Interest organization	48,882	0	1	0.072	0.258
- Religious organization	48,778	0	1	0.156	0.363
- Leisure association	48,936	0	1	0.200	0.400
Education	47,375	0	25	11.340	4.245
Income	43,748	-2.132	22.895	0.000	1.000
Women	52,517	0	1	0.534	0.499
Age	52,203	15	98	45.956	17.270
Age squared	52,203	225	9604	2410.222	1698.571
Marital status	52,288				
Paid work	52,023	0	1	0.539	0.498
Church attendance	47,913	1	8	3.820	2.371
Religious denomination	49,899				
Welfare state expenditure	44,994	-17.460	13.375	-0.718	8.332
GDP/ capita	51,152	-16.076	17.976	-0.403	9.387
Years of democracy	51,152	-39.711	40.289	-0.885	32.161
Valid N (listwise)	27,480				

Table A7.3
ISSP Random intercept models for interest organizations with different sets of countries (multi-level logistic coefficients)

	Set ESS (N = 14)	Set 2 (N = 22)	Set 3 (N = 26)	Full (N = 31)
Fixed:				
Intercept	-7.555**	-6.995**	-6.792**	-6.816**
Education	0.050**	0.054**	0.066**	0.076**
Income	0.077*	0.092**	0.119**	0.121**
Gender	-0.337**	-0.298**	-0.288**	-0.312**
GDP/ capita	0.046*	0.062**	0.046**	0.039*
Years of Democracy	-0.005	-0.003	0.001	0.001
Welfare state expenditure	0.034	-0.021	-0.022	-0.023~
Random:				
Intercept (variance)	0.096*	0.106**	0.128**	0.159**

Note. All models are controlled for age, age-squared, marital status, being employed, church attendance, denomination. Set ESS: Austria, Germany (East), Germany (West), Denmark, Spain, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia. Set 2: previous plus Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Latvia. Set 3: previous plus United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand. Set 4: previous plus Chile, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, Uruguay, Venezuela.
*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

Table A7.4
ISSP Random intercept models for leisure associations with different sets of countries (multi-level logistic coefficients)

	Set ESS (N = 14)	Set 2 (N = 22)	Set 3 (N = 26)	Full (N = 31)
Fixed:				
Intercept	-2.808**	-2.510**	-2.550**	-2.189**
Education	0.051**	0.058**	0.064**	0.066**
Income	0.149**	0.135**	0.127**	0.128**
Gender	-0.285**	-0.345**	-0.296**	-0.347**
GDP/ capita	0.060~	0.078**	0.039~	0.023
Years of Democracy	0.008	0.008	0.014**	0.015**
Welfare state expenditure	0.057	-0.004	0.010	-0.010
Random:				
Intercept (variance)	0.251*	0.222**	0.242**	0.245**

Note. All models are controlled for age, age-squared, marital status, being employed, church attendance, denomination. Set ESS: Austria, Germany (East), Germany (West), Denmark, Spain, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia. Set 2: previous plus Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Latvia. Set 3: previous plus United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand. Set 4: previous plus Chile, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, Uruguay, Venezuela.

~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).

Table A7.5
ISSP Random intercept models for religious organizations with different sets of countries (multi-level logistic coefficients)

	Set ESS (N = 14)	Set 2 (N = 22)	Set 3 (N = 26)	Full (N = 31)
Fixed:				
Intercept	-8.203**	-8.385**	-8.540**	-7.843**
Education	0.037**	0.035**	0.038**	0.027**
Income	0.073*	0.051	0.048~	0.037
Gender	-0.034	0.010	0.088~	0.086~
GDP/ capita	0.008	0.044	0.050	0.037
Years of Democracy	0.000	0.000	0.006	0.005
Welfare state expenditure	0.034	0.036	0.011	-0.022
Random:				
Intercept (variance)	0.112*	0.456**	0.468**	0.620**

Note. All models are controlled for age, age-squared, marital status, being employed, church attendance, denomination. Set ESS: Austria, Germany (East), Germany (West), Denmark, Spain, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia. Set 2: previous plus Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Latvia. Set 3: previous plus United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand. Set 4: previous plus Chile, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, Uruguay, Venezuela.
*~ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01 (two-tailed).*

Table A10.1
Trends in Time Spent on Social Participation (DTUS; hours/week)

	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Volunteering	1.14	1.24	1.39	1.27	1.43	1.16	1.06
Informal sociability within the home	11.26	10.57	9.53	9.20	8.54	7.78	6.84
Informal sociability outside the home	2.39	2.17	2.34	2.50	2.72	2.47	2.54
Distant social contacts[a]	-[b]	0.56	0.71	0.73	0.91	1.33	1.83

[a] *These now also include the use of email, chat, msn, ICQ, and similar applications (contrary to chapter three).*
[b] *Telephone calls were not registered in 1975*
Note. Data were weighed for age, gender, employment, and population density.